







A DANBURY SPELLING-SCHOOL. — Page 99.

THEY ALL DO IT;

OR,

MR. MIGGS OF DANBURY AND HIS NEIGHBORS.

BEING

A FAITHFUL RECORD OF WHAT BEFELL THE MIGGSES
ON SEVERAL IMPORTANT OCCASIONS. TO-
GETHER WITH A FULL ACCOUNT OF
STIRRING EVENTS IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE
INTERVALS.

CAREFULLY PREPARED BY J. M. BAILEY,

THE DANBURY-NEWS MAN.

Illustrated.

BOSTON
LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS
10 MILK STREET

BOOKS BY JAMES M. BAILEY

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PREFACE.

IT is the custom for an author to preface his volume with an apology for appearing before the public. In this case, an apology is needed, I fear, for the author not appearing ere this. It is four years since I came to you in book-shape: the absence was unavoidable. When "Life in Danbury" was published, I believed it would be the last, as it was the first, compilation of writings I should make. Even in the flush of its great success I did not waver in this belief. In the intervening years I have been frequently solicited to bring out a similar book, but steadily refused. A "similar" work was not desirable. I wanted something different, something much better, for a second book; and enough material for this purpose was not at hand. It required time to accumulate. That time has been accomplished now, I believe; and I send forth this volume in the confi-

dence, that, whatever it may do for the publisher and myself, it is a much better book than its predecessor.

The contents of the first book were almost entirely selected from the issues of "The News" in the year immediately preceding, and many of the articles were fresh in the mind of the general reader. This was dreadfully unpleasant ; but it was unavoidable. Again : the volume was largely composed of short paragraphs, which may have been good enough in their way, but, from their brevity, made the reading a trifle hummocky, and tended somewhat to mar the symmetry of the plot.

I like to see the plot of a book all right, even if the binding is a little lame.

The selections for this volume cover a period of four years. From the abundance of material in that time furnished, a careful and conscientious choice has been made. It is a compilation of sketches and essays without paragraphs ; and, from beginning to end, not one of its fair pages is sullied by a pun.

It is just such a book as I have often awaked in the night and wished the other had been, but which was, at the time, impossible to make.

And just here I desire to heartily thank the public for the enthusiastic reception it gave to "Life in Danbury," and express my gratitude to the writers of the hundreds of letters sent me by pleased readers. If I were not made proud and happy by these manifestations of approval, I would be less than human.

Now, dear reader, do be careful in going through this book. Do be calm: there is no hurry. It is not intended to be read through at a sitting. Not one constitution in a hundred can pass through such an ordeal without seriously impairing its future usefulness. It is a work to be consulted at odd times. It is designed to rest you when you are tired, to cheer you when depressed, and to tone you down generally when you are inclined to make yourself disagreeable about the house.

Take it with your solid reading as you would sauce with your food.

The man who sits down to a dinner of roast turkey, and fills himself to the brim with stewed cranberries, is not necessarily a foe to the cook; but he should be promptly and carefully examined by a good doctor.

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This is a duty he owes to his family, I think.

Trusting that the good feeling brought about by the advent of the other book will be greatly stimulated by this, I remain

Yours sincerely,

THE AUTHOR.

MR. MIGGS OF DANBURY,

AND OTHER SKETCHES.



MIGGS'S JULIA.

"WELL, I declare, if the Miggses haven't got another young one!" observed Mrs. Melville to Mrs. Routon, who lived next door, one morning in November last.

"You don't say!" exclaimed Mrs. Routon in considerable amazement, which was heightened in effect by a mark of flour on her nose, as she was mixing bread when the information came to her.

"Yes : my Henry just told me. It does beat all what poor people want of so many young ones. It seems as if, the less people had, the more mouths they got to fill. Now, them Miggses have all they can do to get bread and potatoes for what they have got ; and now they've gone and got another mouth to fill. I have no patience with them at all."

It immediately transpired that what Mrs. Melville thought was just what Mrs. Routon thought.

And it came about very soon, that the entire neighborhood was of the same opinion. The Miggses had made an unhappy mistake.

Miggs's Julia came in the dawn of the day when Mrs. Melville communed with Mrs. Routon. All through that night the wind howled and shrieked and screamed, and the rain came in dashes so prolonged and fierce, as if it was pouring out the concentrated fury of five centuries upon the devoted earth. It was not a propitious night for taking a first view of this world; and perhaps that may have accounted for the tired look in the pair of eyes which lay staring upwards when the dawn came, and into which another pair of eyes, very large and very black, looked hungrily. If one so young, so very young, as Miggs's Julia undoubtedly was on this morning of its coming, could comprehend its surroundings, then it must have understood that it was a very unfortunate, if not a criminal, thing for it to have come at all. There can be no doubt but that it so comprehended, and that it so understood. There was certainly an expression on the blue and pinched face signifying that a mistake had been made, but that it was too helpless, if not too indifferent, to correct it.

It was not a strong child. Mrs. Miggs said this over and over again; while Mr. Miggs, although not equally frank, still made no denial of this state of the child's physical condition.

It certainly was not a strong child. Neither was it a nervous child. Day passed into night, and emerged again, as is its habit with every revolution of the earth ; but it brought no change to Miggs's Julia : and it may be questioned if the puny, silent child took any note of the fact whatever. It lay on its back in the crib, with one very blue, and very thin, and very tiny hand clinched, and its eyes staring helplessly upward, as if in a chronic state of apology. It was not a healthy child, and not, by any stretch of the imagination, a handsome child : but the Miggses never spoke of these things ; and perhaps they did not notice them. They called her Julia in deference to the aunt with the ponderous overshoes, who visited the Miggses in state two years ago, a report of which was faithfully rendered in these columns at the time. That was the name given to the blue-faced baby ; and by it, in full, it was called. It was such an old baby, such a tired, unimpressible baby, that no one thought of abbreviating Julia into any thing childish and frivolous. The awful solemnity of the pinched face precluded any such liberty. And so all in the family called it Julia, round and full, but very tender.

Last Thursday morning, Mrs. Routon was mixing bread again, with a mark of flour on her nose, when Mrs. Melville came in, and immediately said, with an effort to suppress herself which was quite evident, —

"Have you heard the news?"

"No. What is it?"

"That baby of Miggs's is dead."

"What!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Melville, complacently smoothing the front of her dress. "It died this morning. It was only real sick for two or three days; but then it never did amount to any thing, you know."

"Yes, I know," said Mrs. Routon.

"And it's a mercy it's gone," remarked Mrs. Melville in the same complacent way. "They couldn't have brought it up as it ought to be; and it's a thousand times better off where it is."

"I suppose Mrs. Miggs feels badly about it," suggested Mrs. Routon after a pause.

"I don't see how she can," somewhat hastily maintained Mrs. Melville: "she's got a whole raft of children now, and has to pinch from morning to night to get them half clothed and fed. She ought to be thankful that this one is gone where it won't suffer any more."

Do you hear that, Matilda Miggs? You ought to be thankful that your baby is gone, and to realize that it *is* a mercy that it is gone. That's what you ought to be; but you don't look much like it, crouched up in a corner on the floor like a stricken beast, with your great eyes staring agonizingly at the clinched white hand and the pinched face

looking upward from the crib. Ah, Matilda Miggs ! there are a score of neighbors far better informed than you are, who can tell you, and are anxious to tell you, that you ought to be thankful that the little clinched hand is a dead hand, and that the white face now set heavenward forever is a dead face. Never again will the tiny fingers loosen to pass softly over your face ; never again will the closed eyes open to look wonderingly into yours : but you are not thankful for this. If you were in the least bit grateful, you would not crouch down there in the corner. Are you always going to remain there ? Are you always going to stare like that ? Won't you cry out ? Won't you unclinch your hands ? Don't you see that you are disturbing and distressing those who come and look into the crib, and go again, by your stony eyes and your ghastly face ?

Don't you know that you are flying into the very face of society, and the very best society at that ?

And you, John Miggs, with your great hulk of a frame, and white eyes that stare at every thing, and see nothing, standing at the back of the house, and chewing things, and spitting them out again, and kicking things you can't chew, — you are far from looking grateful, however grateful you may feel. Don't you hear what society says to you ? You ought to be grateful that the white face is staring no more at your ceiling, that the tired eyes

are no more looking for bread, and that the pitiful mouth has grown close in death, and will never open again for you to fill it, — never again. Look up at the heavens, John Miggs, and see how ragged are the clouds which cover them. Look all about you over the earth with its decay, and its filth and *débris*, and bareness and rust, and then look upon yourself and your home, and see poverty and struggling everywhere. Ain't you glad that the pinched face is a dead face? If you ain't glad, you are a foe to society, and as much of an animal as the woman with the stricken face and the despairing eyes.

And as for you, Tommy Miggs, grovelling on the dirty slabs of the shed-floor, there is some excuse for you, because you are young. But even *you* have felt the grip of your lifetime foe; and even *you* ought to get up on your feet, and take the patched arms from over the aching head, and choke back that nameless feeling in your breast which makes your throat dry and your eyes lustreless, and try to look glad.

And there is the "whole raft" of Miggses, knuckling their aching eyes with their rebellious fists, and crying silently in darkened corners for the baby-face with its tired look and its pitiful eyes to come back to them.

There is not a spark of gratitude in all that house, — not one single spark of gratitude. It is awful.

A PATRIOT'S IGNOBLE REPULSE.

HE was a stranger to Danbury, and somewhat inebriated, we are sorry to say. Where he came from, and where he was going, were facts that did not transpire while he was among us. His first appearance was in the bank. There was an old gentleman at the patrons' desk, laboriously indorsing a check. The stranger went up to him, and slapped him on the back without ostentation. The old gentleman's pen was just in the act of completing the tour of the letter Z. The jar sent it up to the north-west corner of the paper, and thence drove it into the desk. The writer turned about in unmitigated astonishment.

"What do you want, sir?" he demanded, with his spectacles reeling around on the end of his nose from the effect of the shock.

"I come to see you about Taylor," said the stranger.

"Taylor? What Taylor?"

"Zach., of course; President, you know," explained the stranger with an agreeable smile. "Lays down there now; not a stone to mark his grave, by Jinks!" and the stranger's face suddenly grew serious.

"What do I know about that?" said the old gentleman, grabbing up the pen.

"Ain't you going to do any thing about it?"

demanded the stranger, catching hold of the desk to steady himself.

"Go way! you're drunk!" pettishly exclaimed the old gentleman, discovering this and the horrid scratch on the cheek both at the same time.

"Drunk yourself, you ole fool!" retorted Mr. Taylor's friend, looking about for the man who stood back of the counter when he came in. Not seeing him, however, he gave the old gentleman a cordial invitation to go soak himself, and departed. The moment he got outside of the door, the cashier of the bank appeared from under the counter, and gazed absently at the ceiling.

The stranger next went into Morrill's toy-store. Mr. Morrill, who is a thin, tall person, was endeavoring to sell a lady a horse and wagon artistically constructed of tin, and elaborately colored.

"Good-afternoon," said he with a merchant's seductive smile.

"How are ye?" responded the stranger. "Are you the proprietor?"

"I am."

"Glad to see you. Will you just step one side a moment? I want to see you on special business."

Mr. Morrill took the new-comer to the end of the room, and then looked anxiously at him.

"You are nicely fixed here, I imagine," said the stranger, peering around. "Dolls with yaller hair, painted dogs, primers, tops, etcettery. Did you

ever think," he suddenly added, "that while you stood in the midst of all this glitter, like a god in a barrel of ice-cream, the grave of Pres. Taylor has no stone to mark the spot?"

"You'll excuse me, sir," said Mr. Morrill, nervously glancing toward the waiting lady; "but you spoke of a matter of importance."

"Ain't it a matter of importance that the grave of the illustrious dead should be hid away under weeds like a bag of stolen apples?"

"I know, sir," said Mr. Morrill soothingly. "But you see I'm very busy just at present; and while I naturally feel a deep interest in Mr. Taylor's affairs, still there's a lady here to purchase a horse and wagon."

"Of course you are a man of feeling," gracefully complied the stranger. "Just gimme ten cents, and I'll see that Zach. Taylor has an obelisk over his mound before night."

"You'll have to excuse me;" and Mr. Morrill moved back to the lady.

"Ain't you goin' to give me ten cents, you old shrimp?" demanded the stranger with an uncomfortable rise to his voice.

"What do you mean?" gasped the mortified and greatly astonished merchant.

"I want ten cents for the illustrious dead," yelled Mr. Taylor's friend.

"You go out of this store, or I'll put you out," threatened Mr. Morrill.

"You'll put me out, will you, old flat-stomach?" derisively snorted the stranger. "You'll pick me right up an' drop me in the gutter, I suppose, you old lath, and the grave of a president as bald as your skull. Gimme ten cents, I say, or I'll cut off your ears, and shove you under the door."

Mr. Morrill was struck dumb with horror.

"By Godfrey!" suddenly ejaculated the stranger, smiting his forehead in a paroxysm of grief, "to think of Zach. Taylor down there waiting for an obelisk, — a little tiny obelisk, — and his only authorized agent snapped up by two quarts of bones in a borrowed suit of clothes! I won't stay in a town like this. I won't stay a minute longer. I shall go back of some freight-house and break my heart, and be laid away with laurel and spices."

And he straightway departed. An hour later he was sitting on a plank in the lock-up, waiting for a freight-house and laurel and spices to come along.

THE SYMPATHIZING STRANGER.

AN elderly man with peaked features, large watery eyes, and an attire of dilapidated respectability, called at a Danbury house last Friday morning for a "lunch." He said he was travelling from Boston to Buffalo, at which latter place he had

great expectations. He sat down at the kitchen-table, with his long legs coiled up under it, and his long arms spread out upon it, while his ponderous nose stood out like a grease-spot on a pair of white pants.

The woman of the house brought him a plate of bread and meat, and a bowl of coffee. While she was placing the things, he noticed that she wore a black dress, and a look of pallor.

"Had a death, madam?" he softly inquired as he squared himself for the repast.

"Yes, sir."

"Lately?"

"Last Tuesday," she answered faintly.

"I was sure of it. Father? mother? sister? brother?" he asked, taking up a piece of meat with one hand, and slapping it appetitely upon a piece of bread in the other.

"My husband, sir," she said, drawing out a handkerchief, while her lips quivered. She looked so white and sad and drooping as she sat there, that his heart was touched.

"Did he die a natural death?" he asked, softly chewing on the food, and bending the full glance of his large eyes upon her.

"Yes, sir."

"It's a bad thing in one so young as you to lose her protector. But he died a natural death; and there is comfort in that." He slapped another

piece of meat upon another piece of bread, and quietly put his teeth through them.

"You know," he presently added, revolving the morsel in his mouth, and assuming an appearance of delicate cheerfulness, "that he died calmly, with every want attended to, and loving hands to administer to him. Could I trouble you for a little mustard?" She wearily arose, and got him the article. "There's comfort in that, isn't there?" he continued, referring to the passing-away of the deceased.

"Yes," she said in a low tone, wiping her eyes.

"Now you know," he said, looking intently at her with his eyes, while his hands spread the mustard, "it might have been much different and far worse. He might have been run over by a train of coal-cars, and cut into pound lumps stuck full of gravel?"

"I know," said she with a shiver.

"Then, again, he might have been blown up in a defective sawmill," said the stranger, taking another bite of the food, and gently closing his eyes, as if the better to picture the irredeemable horror of this proposition, "and only about two-thirds of him, and that badly damaged, ever returned to your agonized sight."

A low sob behind the handkerchief was the only response, while he opened his eyes in time to detect a fly making extraordinary efforts to shake its

hind-legs free from the mustard. Coming mechanically to the assistance of the insect, he said, —

“It is bad enough to lose him, I’ll admit that. No one would be so calloused as to deny that,” he said, looking around inquiringly, as if to make quite sure that no such a party was in sight. “Still it could have been much worse, you know. He might have been prematurely perforated with the ramrod of a cannon, and had to have had chloroform injected in him at an expense of twenty-five dollars a day. This would have been dreadful. But if he’d fallen into a vat of hot oil, and had all his flesh peeled off, you’d never got over it, would you?”

“No, sir,” said she, burying her face still deeper in her handkerchief.

“Oh! there are a hundred ways he might have died,” he went on, taking a sweep with the knife at a fly, in the exuberance of his delight that things were as they were, instead of as they might have been. “He might have perished in a fire, and been dug out of the ruins the next day with a pickaxe. He might have fallen off a two-story building, and struck on his face, and had to have gone through the funeral on his stomach, with weeping friends pressing the last fond kiss on the back of his head.”

Here the narrator shuddered himself at the awful prospect of such a catastrophe, while the bereaved woman agonizingly protested against his proceeding.

"You'll admit it might have been worse?" he asked with undisguised anxiety.

"Oh, yes, sir!" she replied, wiping her eyes.

"I'm glad of that," said he, exploring his under jaw with the fork. "Afflictions will come; but if we try to think of those which are greater that have not come to us, then we are better able to bear those that do. It's been my object to teach you that a natural death is not a thing to despise in these times of rush, crash, and sputter; and, if you have learned the lesson, my mission is accomplished, and I go my way. I don't want to intrude, of course, on the privacy of a deep grief; but if the deceased was about my build, and left behind a vest not too gaudy in pattern, I should be pleased to take it along with me as a souvenir of departed worth." He paused an instant, and then added with touching solemnity, "These were *his* victuals; and it would seem appropriate as well as beautiful to have them held in by *his* vestures."

When he went away, he had as a souvenir of departed worth something he could pull down if required so to do.

AN ACCOMMODATING REPORTER.

If there is a vacancy in the reportorial department of any of our contemporaries, we know of a

party who can fill it, although we do not know the party's present address. He came to Danbury two weeks ago to report happenings for the local edition of "The News," and proved to be an unusually acceptable man for the place. He was a pale-faced young man, of strong nervous force, but a calm exterior. The expression of his features was of that peculiar kind which implied either purity of purpose, or impurity of liver. He had been here two weeks. He was sitting alone in the editorial room last Friday, when a knock at the door summoned him. He opened it, and let in an elderly lady of fleshy mien, who had been so cut in breath by getting up the stairs, that she could say nothing until she had taken a seat.

"Is the editor in?" she finally asked.

"No, ma'am," replied the reporter with his deferential look. He stood near her, with one hand resting on the back of a chair, with an expression of tender attentiveness on his face.

It may be well to explain here, that Danbury contains more fast horses than any town of its size in the world; and, in consequence, fast driving and accidents are of daily occurrence. "The News" is located in that part of Main Street where it suddenly sprawls out as if to make a square, but unexpectedly changes its mind and comes back again. At this point, swift flying teams are constantly passing.

"I'm sorry for that," observed the old lady, speaking slowly because of the trouble with her breath; "because I wanted to see him very much. An' then I had such a time to get across the street for the teams! I declare, I never saw such driving in all my life. I should think your authorities here would put a stop to it."

"They try to," said the reporter; "but it is no use. Are you acquainted with Mr. Bailey?"

"Land, no! I never saw him, an' that's the reason I come in. I live in Ohio, and am visiting a friend in Brookfield; an' I thought, as I was so near Danbury, I would come here an' see him. But it 'pears I have had all my trouble for nothing."

"I am real sorry," said the new man, his face singularly brightening as he spoke. "But he don't come here very often. Age is telling on him."

"He is old, then, is he?" said the old lady. "Well, I might ha' knowed it. But how does he get across this street, with all the teams a-coming as they do? I should think he would be run over and killed."

"Well, I don't wonder you think so. Everybody expresses the same surprise. And it *is* wonderful. By Jove, madam!" continued the young man, his pale face lighting up with a glow of animation, "you would be astonished to see the old gentleman come across that street. He comes down that street there" (pointing up White Street, opposite);

“and, when he gets to the corner, he stops and looks as carefully and intelligently across the road as you could wish anybody to do it. Then he takes off his wig, and wraps it up in paper, and puts it down the leg of one of his boots” —

“Well, I declare!” broke in the old lady. “He wears a wig?”

“Oh, yes! The salt-rheum carried off every hair from his head, which is as bare as a door-knob. Then he takes out his teeth — two plates” —

“Mercy sakes!” cried the listener. “No teeth, nuther?”

“Not of his own, ma’am. Took so much sulphur for the salt-rheum, that it carromed on every tooth in his head, and left his mouth as smooth as a new culvert. Then he takes out his teeth, and puts them down the other boot-leg, and watches for his opportunity. Pretty soon he sees an opening, and then he just bends down his head like this” (suiting the action to the words), “and goes kiting across, throwing both hands over his head, and yowling at the top of his voice, ‘Looh haw! Looh haw!’”

“Mercy sakes!” gasped the old lady in astonishment. “What does that mean?”

“What, ma’am?”

“Looh haw.”

“Oh, that would be ‘Look out!’ if it had teeth in it; but his teeth are in his boot-leg, you know. Just

as he reaches this side, two men appointed for that purpose catch him in a quilt, and carry him right up here, because the exertion exhausts him so that he has no life. Then we rub him, and put in his teeth, and slap on his hair, and fix him against the desk, and he goes right to work as natural as anybody."

"Well, I declare, it is wonderful!" observed the old lady. "How I would like to see the old gentleman! But I can't stay. Please give him my best regards."

"I will, ma'am," said the pale young man.

"Good-day, sir. I am much obliged to you."

"Not at all, ma'am. Good-day." And she was bowed out.

He left Danbury shortly after—on foot. He wouldn't wait for the cars. He said he might as well be walking as standing up in a car.

WE never can tell exactly where we lose our umbrellas. It is singular how gently an umbrella unclasps itself from the tendrils of our mind, and floats out into the filmy distance of nothingness.

BE CHEERFUL AT THE TABLE.

"THE JOURNAL OF HEALTH" says that talking at the table is one of the very best digesters. This, then, accounts for the tremendous appetite everybody has for the Sunday dinner. We never could understand why, with scarcely any exercise on Sunday, the dinner of that day should be heartier and more anxiously sought for by the diner than any other dinner. Many real good Christian people will sacrifice Sunday school, where it is a noon session, in order to get home for something to eat. Although the breakfast has been later than any other of the week, still noon brings a most ravenous appetite. But it is all explained now. Talking at table does it. Everybody knows that the Sunday breakfast is the longest on the floor, and is more talked over than any breakfast of the week. This is the way it comes about. The children are to be got up, and got ready for church. It is immaterial how long people have been married: the woman always gets the breakfast ready as soon as she has called the children. They don't come, as a general thing, when they are called; but no woman allows this to influence her actions. She gets the breakfast just as punctually as if she had never had to wait an hour or so for a dilatory family. This is the grandest illustration of the sublime faith of woman to be found on record. With one or two

of the older children about her, she sits down to the meal. The surroundings of the breakfast would make it a repast of lead, were it not for the conversation, which flows smoothly on. And the great variety of subjects discussed is an important element in the development of the gastric juices. There's her husband, who, seeing the breakfast about ready, thoughtfully arranges his shaving articles, and falls to lathering his face just as he is called to the table. It occurs to him that there should be some explanation of why the meal is always brought on just as he gets to shaving; and he demands it. Then she wants to know why people will persist in shaving when they know the breakfast is right before them. Thus is one subject disposed of. Then there is the boy who is bound to have two cups of coffee. He has to be met on the very first opening of the rebellion.

"You sha'n't have another cup of coffee. One cup is enough for you. You are so nervous now, there's no living with you."

"I want it, I tell you."

"And I tell you you sha'n't have it."

"I will have it."

"What's that, sir?"

No response.

"Don't you never let me hear you talk like that again, sir, or I'll give you something that'll make your tongue civil."

There's the other boy, who perceives that there is not sugar enough in his cup, and hits upon the bold expedient of declaring that there has been no sugar put in at all.

"I know better. You stir it up, and you'll find it sweet enough."

"But I am stirring it up; an' there ain't no sugar in it at all."

"There's all you'll get; and you can drink it, or leave it alone. I've got something else to do besides doctoring you for worms."

Then the father sits down, and is being helped, when another child comes in, and, seeing his mother occupied, backs up to her to have his apron buttoned.

The temerity of this proceeding, although somewhere near its thousandth performance, never becomes sufficiently familiar to be understood by the mother; and she hastily observes, —

"Get away from here: don't you see I'm busy?"

The child sniffs.

"Shut up that yawp, or I'll give you something to sniffle for," volunteers the father.

"Why don't you snap the young one's head off, and be done with it?" retorts the mother, dropping her occupation to attend to the apron.

The father stares morosely around the table. A moment of silence succeeds. Then, the mother's affectionate eye catching the vacant expression on

the face of the oldest boy, — who has a piece of bread poised uncertainly in the air, and is evidently allowing his mind to stray beyond the home-circle, — she observes, —

“Come now, stupid! finish your breakfast, and get ready for church; and don’t sit here gorman-dizing all the forenoon.”

He returns to business at once, and another pause follows. Then comes the following: —

“Take your fingers out of that dish!”

“Stop mussing!”

“Where’s your collar?”

“Have you washed back of your ears?”

“Why on earth don’t you sit up straight?”

“I’ll box your ears till they ring if you drop another thing on that floor.”

“Get out of that butter!”

“Stop muxin’ that bread! One would think you were a drove of young hogs to see you at the table.”

“Come, now, get right away from this table! You’ve eaten enough for twenty people. I sha’n’t have you muxing and gauming up the victuals. Clear out, I tell you, and get your Sunday-school lessons!”

Appropriate responses being made to these observations by the parties addressed, the family adjourn from the table, to meet again at dinner with rousing appetites.

Let's have more conversation at meals, if we wish to enjoy perfect digestion.

A GREAT GRIEF.

DEAR reader, here is an occurrence common all over this broad land, but which the public knows nought of. Scene, a lighted room. Comfortably seated at the table is a man with a careworn face, on which are strangely blended the emotions of relief and apprehension. He settles far back in his chair. He opens a newspaper; and, after a cursory glance over it as a whole, he turns out the local page, and, commencing at the first column, reads carefully down. There is a dead silence in the room. Nought but an occasional slight movement of the paper is heard. The man still reads. He is all absorbed in the performance. Suddenly the face, which has become inexpressive, winces. Pretty soon there is another wince, accompanied by either a decrease or increase of color. Nervously he begins the next column, and goes down it more hastily than the preceding. He reaches the bottom with a sigh of relief, and attacks the third with a trifle less nervousness and much less expression. Suddenly he clutches the paper with a tighter grasp, as if to save himself from falling, and utters

an agonizing exclamation. It is some five minutes before he can resume the reading. Now he is in the last column, and is perusing the marriages. He reaches the last one. It gives the right name of the groom and bride. There is a closing sentence made into a separate paragraph. It is simply this: "The remains will be brought to this town for interment." Then the man in the chair drops the paper to the floor, catches both hands into his hair as if to lift himself from the face of the earth, and utters a groan that seems to come from the very depths of a crushed heart. There is not a soul to witness this misery, not a tongue to speak one word of sympathy. All alone with himself, the wretched man, with white face and flaming eyes, fights his great grief. No one knows his thoughts, or ever will. It is doubtful if he thinks at all. To every appearance he is in a stupor of misery,—a stupor so great as to deprive him of reason, of every motion except the spasmodic twisting at his hair. Heaven help the miserable wretch! for of all the despair and desolation and agony on this globe of ours there is nothing to equal this. The man is a country editor; and the paper is a copy of the edition just issued.

HENS AS A STUDY.

IN our last issue we republished from an agricultural journal an article on feed for hens. We would like to say here that it is the duty of journals to publish all such information, however pertinent it may or may not be. That's the reason we printed the piece in question. We don't know whether the writer knew what he was about when he brought forth the article ; and we don't care. There was no choice with us. We submissively appropriated it just as we do all those matters which pertain to the house and farm department. But what we started out to do was to protest against recipes for making hens lay more eggs than Nature designed they should. Not a day passes but somebody comes forward with a system or diet which he has tested to his entire satisfaction, and which is adapted to every breed and temper of hen in existence. One man gives his fowls oats alone, and finds that they lay a fourth more eggs than they did when he fed them exclusively on corn. This statement fires up somebody to explain that he didn't know what a laying hen really was until he got to feeding his flock corn alone. Heretofore he had dosed them with oats. Here's a decided fix apparently ; but the next week the owner of a couple of hens in Kalamazoo modestly states in a card, that years of careful experimenting has

demonstrated beyond all cavil that oats and corn equally mixed will fire up the ambition of any hen on the face of the earth. So they go on in the matter of food. Then there is the man who advises lime and oyster-shells to prevent the hens from laying soft-shelled eggs. As a hen lays about two such eggs in the course of a year, a couple of dollars' worth of lime judiciously fed to her will prevent the loss, and be money well expended. Then there is the man who advocates better ventilation. Hens are mighty sore on the subject of ventilation, as you may have noticed. Another recommends an air-tight roosting-place; and still another advises shutting up the fowls all the time, and is immediately confronted by a poulterer, who says, that, if they are not allowed to run loose, you can't get eggs out of them any way. These things are what give agricultural journals their wonderful variety. But we protest against them. If any one understands a hen's business better than the hen itself, we are prepared to listen to him; but, until such a phenomenon appears, we unqualifiedly refuse to republish hen recipes. A hen's stomach is an appalling mystery. Men who can translate the elegies of the most barbarous of ancient nations, and give you the weight to an ounce of a square mile of atmosphere, precipitately back down from the analysis of a hen's stomach. An animal that can take down a whole dishcloth at one gulp,

and regret that it wasn't a roll of stair-carpet, is not to be told what it shall eat.

THE BOY WITH A PENNY.

THERE were four of them ; and they were coming down Elm Street. They ranged from four to six years of age. Three of them wore waists ; and the fourth, a jacket. All wore knee-pants with dark-colored stockings ; and two of them had copper-toed shoes. They were holding hands, and moving along at a rapid but irregular pace. It was evident that something of important interest was in prospect by the expectant eyes and flushed cheeks of the four. The calmest-looking boy had something in his mouth, which may have tended to distract his attention from the matter in hand. Whenever he was spoken to, which was about every thirty seconds, the line would halt, his right hand would be loosened, and he would straightway empty into it from his mouth a penny. While this was being done, the three other boys would gather in front of him, and look upon the operation with breathless interest. Having decided the point at issue, the coin would be restored with the same solemn ceremony, the line would re-form, and move forward at a lively pace, until another question

obtruded itself for immediate consideration. The boy with the coin was the centre of all observation and consideration of the others. This was plain to be seen. And the number of tree-boxes and posts and people the line fetched up against, in the determined but hopeless effort of keeping one eye on him, and the other on the path ahead at the same time, would seem almost incredible. But what mattered it? It was better that they should run against everybody else than to lose sight of him a minute. Oh the tender solicitude of these hearts for him! To ignore all the wonderful sights of the busy street just for the sake of him! It was wonderful. When they came to an obstruction that could not be butted over, they gave way promptly, that he might pass safely. All the dry walks were surrendered to him without equivocation; and as for the mud on the crosswalks, they ploughed through it with a heroism that was delightful, so that he might pass dry-shod. It is altogether likely they would have formed a bridge with their bodies over the most repulsive mud, had it been necessary to secure him a safe and pleasant transit, which fortunately it was not. But to no object of interest which happened to catch their gaze did they fail to call his attention, and with an anxiety that must have been very comforting to him. His name was Jim. What their names were, there were no means of finding out, as they

were not uttered. It would have sounded like sacrilege, without doubt, to have mentioned their titles in connection with his. What a happy group they were! How their little feet pattered, and their little legs swung along! How their faces glowed! How their eyes burned! They were new little boys to the street. Perhaps the majority of them had not more than once before seen those stores, — the bright stores with the heaps of treasure glittering through the glass. Perhaps never again would they four share this wonderful, all-consuming ecstasy together. Thank Heaven they enjoy it so hugely! Jim is down town to spend a penny, a whole penny all his own; and the senses of every one of his companions is ravished as if with the glories of paradise. How their memories are spurred up and refreshed as they gallop along! One little boy remembers that he always helped Jim on his lessons; another has got as clear and distinct a remembrance of the time, two months ago, when he gave Jim a piece of rubber to chew, as if the momentous event occurred only the day before; and the third has at his tongue's end a perfectly comprehensive account of an occasion when he let Jim look at a boat he was sailing in a tub, although the event took place in the far-distant summer. As for Jim himself, no king with a sceptre, or a god with lightnings in his grasp, for the matter of that, ever experienced such a weight

of dignified and solemn grandeur. It seemed as if his very clothes were wrought with diamonds and gold, and as if his spine would never desert its perpendicular. Four little boys, hand in hand, eager, expectant, hopeful, delirious, running at the top of their speed, and happier in the anticipation of the coming joy than if they were lovers grown, with a dollar jewelry-store on every corner.

THIS is what may be called a sample of practical affection. True love is not content to bask in the sunshine without an umbrella handy in case of rain. The following letter is a sample in question : —

MY DEAR HUSBAND, — I got here last night all safe, and was met at the station by uncle and aunt. They were so glad I had come ! but were sorry that you were not along. I miss you so much ! We had hot rolls for breakfast this morning, and they were so delicious ! I want you to be so happy while I am here ! Don't keep the meat up stairs : it will surely spoil. Do you miss me now ? Oh, if you were only here, if but for one hour ! Has Mrs. O'R—— brought back your shirts ? I hope the bosoms will suit you. You will find the milk tickets in the clock : I forgot to tell you about them when I came away. What did you do last evening ? Were you lonesome without me ? Don't forget to scald the milk every morning. And I wish you would see if I left the potatoes in the pantry : if I did, they must be sour by this time. How are you getting along ? Write me

all about it. But I must close now. Oceans of love to you. Affectionately your wife.

P.S.— Don't set the teapot on the stove.

TEMPEST IN A TUB.

It was all about a wash-tub. Mrs. Villiers had loaned Mrs. Ransom her wash-tub. This was two weeks ago last Monday. When Mrs. Villiers saw it again, which was the next morning, it stood on her back-stoop, minus a hoop. Mrs. Villiers sent over to Mrs. Ransom's, a request for that hoop, couched in language calculated to impugn Mrs. Ransom's reputation for carefulness. Mrs. Ransom lost no time in sending back word that the tub was all right when it was sent back ; and delicately intimated that Mrs. Villiers had better sweep before her own door first, whatever that might mean. Each having discharged a Christian duty to each other, further communication was immediately cut off ; and the affair was briskly discussed by the neighbors, who entered into the merits and demerits of the affair with unselfish zeal. Heaven bless them ! Mrs. Ransom clearly explained her connection with the tub by charging Mr. Villiers with coming home drunk as a fiddler the night before Christmas. This bold statement threatened to carry the neighbors over in a body to Mrs. Ran-

som's view; until Mrs. Villiers remembered, and promptly chronicled the fact, that the Ransoms were obliged to move away from their last place because of non-payment of rent. Here the matter rested among the neighbors, leaving them as undecided as before. But between the two families immediately concerned the fires burned as luridly as when first kindled. It was a constant skirmish between the two women from early morning until late at night. Mrs. Ransom would glare through her blinds when Mrs. Villiers was in the yard, and murmur between her clinched teeth, —

“Oh, you hussy!”

And, with that wondrous instinct which characterizes the human above the brute animal, Mrs. Villiers understood that Mrs. Ransom was thus engaged, and, lifting her nose at the highest angle compatible with the safety of her spinal cord, would sail around the yard as triumphantly as if escorted by a brigade of genuine princes.

And then would come Mrs. Villiers's turn at the window with Mrs. Ransom in the yard, with a like satisfactory and edifying result.

When company called on Mrs. Villiers, Mrs. Ransom would peer from behind her curtains, and audibly exclaim, —

“Who's that fright, I wonder?”

And, when Mrs. Ransom was favored with a call, it was Mrs. Villiers's blessed privilege to be at the window, and audibly observe —

“Where was that clod dug up from?”

Mrs. Ransom has a little boy named Tommy; and Mrs. Villiers has a similarly sized son who struggles under the cognomen of Wickliffe Morgan. It will happen, because these two children are too young to grasp fully the grave responsibilities of life,—it will happen, we repeat, that they will come together in various respects. If Mrs. Ransom is so fortunate as to first observe one of these cohesions, she promptly steps to the door, and, covertly waiting until Mrs. Villiers’s door opens, she shrilly observes,—

“Thomas Jefferson, come right into this house this minit! How many times have I told you to keep away from that Villiers brat?”

“*Villiers brat!*” What a stab that is! What subtle poison it is saturated with! Poor Mrs. Villiers’s breath comes thick and hard; her face burns like fire; and her eyes almost snap out of her head. She has to press her hand to her heart as if to keep that organ from bursting. There is no relief from the dreadful throbbing and the dreadful pain. The slamming of Mrs. Ransom’s door shuts out all hope of succor. But it quickens Mrs. Villiers’s faculties, and makes her so alert, that when the two children come together again, which they very soon do, she is the first at the door. Now is the opportunity to heap burning coals on the head of Mrs. Ransom. She heaps them.

“Wickliffe Morgan! What are you doing out there with that Ransom imp? Do you want to catch some disease? Come in here before I skin you.”

And the door slams shut; and poor Mrs. Ransom, with trembling form, and bated breath, and flashing eyes, clinches her fingers, and glares with tremendous wrath over the landscape.

And in the absence of any real, tangible information as to the loss of that hoop, this is, perhaps, the very best that can be done on either side.

THERE is a vast difference in the conduct of a man and a woman in new clothes. When a woman gets a new suit, she immediately prances down town, and for hours will walk contentedly along a crowded thoroughfare, receiving fresh impulses of joy every time another woman scans her wardrobe. But a man is *so* different! He won't put on his new clothes for the first time until it is dark; then he goes down town so cautiously as to almost create the impression that he is sneaking along. If he sees a crowd on a corner, he will slip across the way to avoid them; and, when he goes into his grocery, he tries to get behind as many barrels and boxes as he can. All the time he is trying his level best to appear as if the suit was six months

old, and all the while realizes that he is making an infernal failure of it. We hope the time will come when new pants will be so folded by the manufacturer, that they won't show a ridge along the front of each leg when the wearer dons them.

SHOULD THE ASTORS LUG OFF THE MONEY?

THIS is the way Astors are made: A Munson-street man, being told that there were several pieces of tin which needed mending, conceived the idea of getting an iron and solder, and doing the mending himself. His wife, filled with vague forebodings, perhaps, said that the expense was such a trifle, that it would hardly pay to do it one's self; to which he responded, —

“I'll admit, that, in this one instance, it would not pay: but there is something being in want of repair every little while; and, if I have the tools here for fixing it, we are saved just so much expense right along. It may not be much in the course of a year; but every little helps, and, in time, the total would amount to a nice little lump. We don't want the Astors lugging off all the money in the country, by gracious!”

He got the iron (one dollar), and fifty cents' worth of solder, and ten cents' worth of rosin. He came home with these things, and went into the

kitchen, looking so proud and happy, that his wife would have been glad he got them, were it not for an overpowering dread of an impending muss. He called for the articles needing repair. His wife brought out a pan.

"Where's the rest? Bring 'em all out, an' let me make one job of 'em while I'm about it."

He got them all, and seemed to be disappointed that there were not more of them. He pushed the iron into the fire, got a milk-pan inverted on his knee, and, with the solder in his hand, waited for the right heat.

"That iron only cost a dollar, and it'll never wear out; and there is enough solder in this piece to do twenty-five dollars' worth of mending," he explained to his wife.

Pretty soon the iron was at the right heat, he judged. He rubbed the rosin about the hole which was to be repaired, held the stick of solder over it, and carefully applied the iron. It was an intensely interesting moment. His wife watched him with feverish interest. He said, speaking laboriously as he applied the iron, "The-only-thing-I-regret-about-it-is-that-I-didn't-think-of-getting-this-before-we" — Then ascended through that ceiling, and up into the very vault of heaven, the awfulest yell that woman ever heard; and the same instant the soldering-iron flew over the stove, the pan went clattering across the floor, and the bar of solder struck the wall with

such force as to smash right through both the plaster and lath. And before her horrified gaze danced her husband in an ecstacy of agony, sobbing, screaming, and holding on to his left leg as desperately as if it was made of solid gold, and studded with diamonds.

"Get the camphor, why don't you?" he yelled. "Send for a doctor! Oh-oh, I'm a dead man!" he shouted.

Just then his gaze rested on the soldering-iron. In an instant he caught it up, and hurled it through the window, without the preliminary of raising the sash.

It was some time before the thoroughly frightened and confused woman learned that some of the molten solder had run through the hole in the pan, and on to his leg, although she knew from the first that something of an unusual nature had occurred. She didn't send for the doctor. She made and applied the poultices herself, — to save expenses. She said, —

"We don't want the Astors lugging off all the money in the country, by gracious!"

"Come, Maria, don't you be too cunning," he sheepishly expostulated.

WHAT HE WANTED IT FOR.

THOSE who attended the sale of animals from Barnum's hippodrome in Bridgeport, the other day, report the following occurrence. A tiger was being offered. The bid run up to forty-five hundred dollars. This was made by a man who was a stranger, and to him it was knocked down. Barnum, who had been eying the stranger uneasily during the bidding, now went up to him, and said, —

"Pardon me for asking the question; but will you tell me where you are from?"

"Down South a bit," responded the man.

"Are you connected with any show?"

"No."

"And are you buying this animal for yourself?"

"Yes."

Barnum shifted about uneasily for a moment, looking alternately at the man and the tiger, and evidently trying his best to reconcile the two together.

"Now, young man," he finally said, "you need not take this animal unless you want to; for there are those here who will take it off your hands."

"I don't want to sell," was the quiet reply.

Then Barnum said in his desperation, —

"What on earth are you going to do with such an ugly beast, if you have no show of your own, and are not buying for some one who is a show-man?"

"Well, I'll tell you," said the purchaser. "My wife died about three weeks ago. We had lived together for ten years, and — and I miss her." He paused to wipe his eyes, and steady his voice, and then added, "so I've bought this tiger."

"I understand you," said the great showman in a husky voice.

A PRUDENT SUFFERER.

MR. PHIPPS, of the firm of Phipps & Hodge, the Danbury undertakers, was sitting in his shop Saturday afternoon, ruminating gloomily upon the dull times, when the door opened, and in came a stranger. The visitor was a slim-faced man, dressed in a dun-colored suit of rather tight-fitting clothes. He looked clear around the room, carefully avoiding a glance at the undertaker until the circuit was completed.

Then he looked curiously at him, and said, —

"Is the boss in?"

"Yes, sir: I'm one of them. Is there any thing I can do for you, sir?"

"Well, that'll depend on how we kin deal, I reckon," replied the stranger in a tone of subdued shrewdness. "I have just had to shoulder a pretty heavy affliction. My old woman went under yesterday." He paused, and looked interrogatively over the array of coffins and caskets.

"Your wife is dead?" inquired Mr. Phipps with professional anxiety.

"You've hit it square, boss," replied the stranger with an approving nod.

"What time yesterday did the sad event occur?"

"About five P.M., as near as we kin reckon."

"Pass away peacefully?"

"Lit out without a groan," explained the bereaved. "She'd been sick, off an' on, for about two years an' better. Not right down sick all that time; but then I don't think she done a square day's work in two years. It's been a great expense all through; but I don't complain, howsum-ever. I came in to-day to see about fixin' her up."

"Ah, yes! You wish to secure a burial-case. We have, as you see, various kinds. You will want something rather nice, I fancy?" said Mr. Phipps.

"Well, yes: I want something that will show considerable grief an' sorer, but nothin' that's going to upset folks, you know. We are plain people, boss, an', at a time like this, — with a great affliction shouldered on us, — we don't feel like riling up the neighbors. If it was a huskin'-bee, now, or a barn-raisin' even, I'd calculate to make their eyes prance right around in their heads. But," and he sighed heavily, "this is a hoss of another color."

"How would this do?" suggested Mr. Phipps, indicating a plain rosewood.

"What's the price of that? You see, boss, we live over in Baxter Plain. It's a small place, an' there ain't much style. We don't want to go in too heavy, you know."

"Certainly not; but this is a very neat-looking article."

"Yes," coincided the widower: "it does seem as if one needn't feel uneasy with that coffin in the front-room, an' the room full of people."

"I can let you have that for forty-five dollars."

"Jee — Oh, I couldn't think of paying that! Forty-five dollars! why, you kin get a wagon in two colors for that money. You see, boss, this is a plain country funeral, an' not a torch-light procession," feelingly explained the widower.

"How will this do, then?" next inquired the undertaker, hastily pointing to another article, of common wood, brightly stained.

"How much is that?"

"Only eighteen dollars."

"Eighteen dollars, hey? Well, that's much more like it. Still, don't it strike you that eighteen dollars is pretty steep for these times?"

"Not for an article like that, sir. I can assure you that such a coffin could not have been bought for a cent less than twenty-two dollars one year ago."

"It may be cheap, as you say," ruminated the bereaved; "yet eighteen dollars is a good big pile of money. I want something nice, of course; but I don't want to jump in so mighty heavy as to make people think I never had a funeral before. You get what I mean?"

"Oh, yes! perfectly. You want an article that will look respectable, and in keeping with your circumstances; but yet you do not wish to be too demonstrative in your sorrow."

"By jinks! I guess you've got it square on the head," said the pleased sufferer.

"Now, this is an article that just answers the purpose, in my judgment; and I have had years of experience."

"Yes, yes: you must 'av' tucked in a heap of em," said the stranger in a tone of unqualified respect. "This is a sound one, I suppose," he continued, tapping the sides.

"Perfectly so: we use the very best kinds of wood," explained Mr. Phipps.

"Just see here a minute," exclaimed the stranger, suddenly and impressively drawing the undertaker to one side. "You say that coffin is sound as a nut, an' you want eighteen dollars for it. Now, I want you to understand there ain't any thing small about me, an' that I've got just as much respect for the dead as any other man living, I don't care where you snake him from.



A PRUDENT SUFFERER. — Page 42.



But winter is coming on, you know, an' we owe a little to the living as well. That's a sound coffin, an' a sound coffin does well enough in the right place, you know; but I want to ask you, as a man of experience in these things, an' understanding what grief is, if you ain't got a box of that pattern that's got some sort of a defect in the wood, which you could knock off a little on."

"I haven't, sir."

"Just think a minit, please, he anxiously resumed. "Nothing a little rotted?"

The undertaker shook his head.

"With a worm-hole or so in,—I don't mind a dozen," suggested the sorrowing one.

"No."

"Or a little sappy? Don't answer too quick: take time. Just a little sappy where it wouldn't be seen by the public, you know?"

"I haven't such a piece of wood in the establishment. We use none that is imperfect."

"Eighteen dollars it is, then?" sighed the afflicted.

"Yes, sir."

"I must take it, I suppose," he observed; "but, when the neighbors see that coffin, they'll swear that old J— has struck a gold mine. Now, mark my words." And he passed gloomily out

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

It is Saturday night, — the dear close of a tossing, struggling, restless week. To-morrow is the sabbath, when all labor and care are held in abeyance. Saturday night stands like a rock before the day of rest, and says to toil and worry, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther." Blessed Saturday night! The wearied husband and father approaches his home. He looks ahead, and sees the light streaming in cheerful radiance from the windows, and wonders if that boy has got in the kindlings. He steps up on the stoop, and opens the door. His faithful wife meets him at the entrance, and greets him with, "Why on earth don't you clean your feet, and not lug the house full of mud? Don't you know I've been scrubbing all day?" And thus he steps into the bosom of his family, grateful for the mercies he has received, and thankful that he has a home to come to when the worry and care and toil of the week are done. Yes, he is home now, and has set his dinner-pail on one chair, and laid his hat and coat on another, and, with his eyes full of soap from the wash, is shouting impetuously for the towel. Saturday night in the household! What a beautiful sight! — the bright light, the cheerful figured carpet, the radiant stove, the neatly laid table with the steaming teapot, the pictures on the walls, the spotless

curtains, the purring cat, and the bright-eyed children, rubbing the plates with their fingers, and looking hungrily at the canned cherries. Even the wearied wife is visibly affected; and, as she steps to a closet with his hat and coat, she unconsciously observes to her husband, —

“Will you never learn to hang your things up? or do you think I’ve got nothin’ else to do but chase after you all the while you are in the house?”

He makes no reply; but, as he drops into his seat at the table with a sigh of relief, he says, —

“What’s the matter with that infernal lamp? Is the oil all out? or ain’t the chimney been cleaned? It don’t give no more light than a fire-bug.”

“Turn it up, then,” she retorts. “It was right enough when I put it on the table; but I suppose the children have been fooling with it. They never can keep their hands out of mischief for an instant.”

“I’ll fool ’em,” he growls, “if they don’t keep their fingers off’n things!”

After this sally, a silence reigns, broken only by a subdued rustle of plates and cutlery. Then comes a whisper from one of the children, which is promptly met in a loud key by the mother.

“Not another mouthful, I tell you. You have had one dish already, and that’s enough. I ain’t going to be up all night wrastling around with you, young woman; and, the quicker you straighten that face, the better it’ll be for you.”

The offender looks with abashed inquiry into the faces of her brothers and sisters, and gradually steals a glance into the face of her father, but, finding no sympathy there, falls to making surreptitious grimaces at the mother, to the relief of herself, and the intense edification of the other children.

The tea is finally over, — that delightful Saturday night's meal; and as the appeased father stretches back in his chair, and looks dreamily at the flame dancing in the stove, he says to his first-born, —

“Is them kindlings cut, young man?”

Of course they have not been; and the youth replies, —

“I'm going right out to do it now,” and steps about lively for his hat.

“You'd better; and if I come home again, and find them kindlings not cut, I won't leave a whole bone in your body. Do you hear me?”

“Yes, pa.”

“Well, then, start your boots.”

They are started; and the relieved father comes back with his eyes to the glad flame, and watches it abstractedly, while his thoughts are busy with the bright anticipations of the coming day of rest.

“Ain't you going down street? or are you going to set there all night?” asks his wife. He turns around and looks at her. It's a sort of mechanical movement, without any apparent expression. “There's got to be something got for dinner to-

morrow; and I want you to go to Adams's, an' see if my hat is done; an' Thomas must have a pair of shoes; an' there ain't a bit of blacking in the house," resumes the mother. "You can tell Burroughs, that that last butter he sent up ain't fit for a hog to eat; an', if he ain't got any thing better than that, we don't want it. You'd better get a small piece of pork while you are down; an' if you see Parks, ask him when he's coming here to fix that wall. He has got the plaster off, an' there it stands; an' there's no use of trying to put the room to rights until the wall is fixed. I don't see what the old fool is thinking of to leave a room like that."

Hereupon the head of the house gets up on his feet, takes a brief, longing glance at the pleasant stove, and wants to know where in thunder his coat and hat are, and if nothing can be left where it is put. Then she tells him, that, if he looks where he ought to, he'd find the things fast enough. He does find them, and then goes into the kitchen, and a moment later re-appears with a very red face, and passionately asks if a basket can be kept in that house for five minutes at a time, and moodily follows his wife to where the basket is, and looks still more moody when he is brought face to face with it, and sarcastically asked if he could see a barn if it was in front of his nose. Thus primed with the invigorating utterances of the home-circle, he takes up his basket, and goes down street, leaving his

faithful wife to stand as a wall of granite between the children and the canned cherries, and to finish up the work. As he reaches the gate, the door opens ; and she shouts after him, —

“Remember to get some matches ; there ain’t one in the house : and don’t be all night, for I’m tired, an’ want to get to bed at a decent hour, if possible.”

“Go to bed, then, an’ shut up your mouth ;” and, with this parting injunction, he strides gloomily out into the darkness. It is not exactly known what he is thinking of as he moves along ; but it is doubtless of the near approach of the sabbath. As he comes into the light of the stores, it is evident that bright influences, and tender memories, and glad anticipations, are weaving themselves in his heart ; for he meets Parks with a smile, and, after a pleasant chat about the winter’s prospect, they part, laughing. Only twice in the trip does his face fall ; and that’s when he goes in after her hat, and when he gets the shoes. A half-hour later he is in the grocery, sitting on a barrel while his goods are being put up, and carrying on an animated discussion with the grocer and several acquaintances. At nine o’clock he starts for home. He has several receipted bills in his pocket, each of which is in excess, of course, of what his wife had estimated before he left home ; and as he struggles along with an aching arm, and stumbles against various ob-

structions, he remembers it is Saturday night, the end of the week of toil, and tries to recall bits of verses and sentences of beautiful sentiment appropriate to the hour. He don't believe in grumbling at everybody ; and so he reserves his trouble with the grocery-bill, his indignation at the milliner, and the various annoyances he has been subjected to, until he gets home ; and then he hurls his thunder at all these people and objects through the head of his wife. And she, the dear companion of his life, having got the children from back of the stove and to bed by the hair, and discovered that he has forgotten the matches, and got more bone than meat in the steak, is fully prepared to tell him just what she thinks of him.

And while they talk, the flame in the stove dances happily, the lamp sheds a rich, soft glow over the room, and the colors in the carpet and in the pictures, and the reflective surfaces of the mantle ornaments, blend into a scene of quiet beauty. It is the night before the sabbath, — the calm, restful sabbath ; and, as the two workers prepare to seek their well-earned repose, she says, that, if she has got to be harassed like this, she'll be in her grave before the winter is over ; and he is confident, that, if the bills keep mounting up as they are doing, the whole family will be in the poor-house the first thing they know.

THAT AWFUL BOY.

A FAMILY of some pretensions, living on Nelson Street, had a party of five to tea Thursday evening. The table was set out in fine style, as the company were from the city, and it was absolutely necessary to show them that folks may live in a village like Danbury, and yet understand the requirements of good society. When they were all at the table, and the lady was preparing to dish up the tea, her little son, whose face shone like the knees of a country clergyman's pants, pulled her secretly by the dress. But she was too busy to notice. He pulled her again ; but, receiving no response, he whispered, —

“Ma, ma !”

“What is it ?”

“Ain't this one of Miss Perry's knives ?” holding up the article in his hand, and looking, as he properly should, very much gratified by such an evidence of his discernment.

She made no reply in words ; but she gave him a look that was calculated to annihilate him.

The tea was dished out, and the party were buttering their biscuit, when the youth suddenly whispered again, looking at his plate with a pleased expression, “Why, ma, my plate is different from the others.”

“Thomas !” she ejaculated under her breath.

“Why, it is, ma,” persisted Thomas. “Now, just see here : this plate has ” —

"Thomas," again ejaculated his mother with crimsoned face, while his father assumed a frown nearly an inch thick, "if you don't let your victuals stop your mouth, I'll send you away from the table."

This quieted Thomas at once. He was not a very particular boy; and he concluded that the difference in the plates was not of such moment as to admit of tedious argument at this time.

Several minutes passed without any further interruption. The young man industriously attended to his food, but at the same time kept a close eye on what was going on around him. He was lifting up his cup for a sip, when his glance unfortunately fell upon the saucer. It was but a glance; but, with the keenness of a young eye, he saw that the two were not originally designed for each other.

"Why, ma," he eagerly whispered, "this cup don't belong to" —

Then he suddenly stopped. The expression of his mother's face actually rendered him speechless, and for a moment he applied himself to his meal in depressed silence. But he was young, and of an elastic temper; and he soon recovered his beaming expression. A little later, he observed a lady opposite putting a spoon of preserved grapes in her mouth; then he twitched his mother's dress, and said again, —

"Ma!"

The unhappy woman shivered at the sound; but

his remark, this time, appeared to be on an entirely different subject, as he asked, —

“Ain’t Miss Walker a funny woman?”

“Funny?” said his mother with a sigh of relief. And then turning to the company with the explanation, “Mrs. Walker is an old lady who lives across the way,” she smiled on her hopeful son, and asked, “What makes you think she is funny?”

“Why, you know — you know,” began Thomas, in that rapid, moist way which an only son assumes when he is imparting information before company, in response to a cordial invitation, “when I went over there this afternoon to get the spoons, she said she hoped the company wouldn’t bite ’em, as it would dent” —

“Thomas!” shrieked the unhappy mother as soon as she could break in.

“Young man,” gasped the father, “leave this table at once.”

And Thomas left at once. His father subsequently followed him, and the two met in a back-room; and, had both been flying express-trains coming together, there could scarcely have been more noise.

It was quite cold in the car. The passengers were shrinking up into as small a space as possible, and looking straight ahead into nothing with frown-

ing visages. A very little boy was snuggled up in his mother's arms. The train stopped at a station, when he said, —

“Am I goin' home, mamma?”

“Yes, dear.”

“Papa's home?”

“Yes.”

“Are you goin' to see papa?”

“Yes, dear.”

The child lifted up his head, and, looking eagerly into his mother's face, enthusiastically exclaimed, “When papa sees me, he'll say, ‘Come here, you peshous lam’.’”

The smile which illuminated the passengers' faces upon this outburst of childish expectation drove away the frown, and brought them out of themselves for the rest of the journey.

THERE can be no doubt whatever that a pew-bench is the most dreadful object in existence. However cautiously you may approach it, it is sure to fly up at one end, and come down again with a thud that makes your scalp creep, and draws upon you the indignant glances of everybody in the building. And, even if you don't put your foot on it, the fear that you may do so, when not thinking, draws your mind from the sermon, and fastens it upon the dread possibility in lively terror. Pew-

benches should be run full of lead at both ends, and held down by iron cables attached to rocks sunk in the cellar ; but, until this is done, the only alternative offered is drawing your legs up on the seat, and sitting on them till the service is over.

HE WANTED TO KNOW THE MENU.

JAY CHARLTON'S admirable articles on cookery are not always productive of the happiest results, although the fault does not lie with him. Mr. Jopper is, ordinarily, a quiet man, and sufficiently submissive to suit the most exacting wife. But that discretion which is the better part of valor is quite frequently dulled and rendered ineffective when the possessor is full of liquor. It was just in this deplorable, and, we may add, unusual state, Mr. Jopper appeared at his home Monday evening. At the "store" they had been talking of Mr. Charlton's recent article on the importance of a well-furnished table ; and this topic appeared to have engrossed his mind to the entire exclusion of every thing else. He found his wife mixing up the pancake batter.

It was evident he was unsettled as to the exact time of day.

"What's the *menu*?" he hilariously shouted.

"What are you talking about?" she demanded,

giving him a look that would, in sober moments, have subdued him at once.

"The *menu*, the *menu*: that's what's my language on this occasion," he boisterously repeated, not noting her expression.

"Are you going to bed?" she hoarsely muttered.

"No, I ain't going to bed, not by a jugful, until I find out what I find out." He caught hold of a chair to steady himself. "I tell you, Mrs. Jopper, there's goin' to be change here at once."

"Oh!" It was all she said; but it had a mighty significance.

"Yez, zir, goin' to be a change," continued the unfortunate man, flourishing his unoccupied hand for emphasis. "I ain't goin' to stand this sort of living any longer. There's got to be a change in the *menu*; or, first thing you know, I'll get depressed, an' be comin' home drunk, — drunk, by gracious!

"Oh!"

"Yez, zir. Old girl, you've got to hike aroun' and fling some style inter the victuals. You've" —

She was on him in a flash, — on him with flashing eyes, and plying fingers, and heated breath.

"What do you say, you drunken vagabond?" she screamed, placing her knees on his chest, and clutching her fingers into his hair, and twisting his head with such fury, that it was a great wonder she didn't dislocate his neck.

"Lemme up!" he yelled.

"You want a change, do you, in the cooking?" she hissed.

"No, I don't! no, I don't!" he howled. "Hope to die if I do!"

"Want me to hike around, eh, an' put on style, you drunken lout?" she continued in a voice suppressed by passion.

"Lemme up!" he screamed.

"What's the *menu*, is it? What's the *menu*? Oh, you old whiskey tank! I'll show you what's the *menu*!" and she gave his head a terrific wrench.

"Ouch!" he yelled.

"Do you want to know what's the *menu* now?" she hissed.

"No!" he shouted.

"Will you go to bed?"

"Yes!" he howled.

Then she let him up, and, agreeably to promise, he went directly to bed, and hasn't manifested the faintest anxiety in regard to the *menu* once since.

WHO WAS TO BLAME?

MRS. PULSEY was real indignant yesterday morning on finding the handle to the coal sieve not yet mended, although broken two weeks ago.

Mrs. Pulsey actually shed tears of vexation. The very day the handle was broken she told Mr. Pulsey, and he said he would attend to it at once; and he had continued to promise to do it with unimpeachable faithfulness. Mrs. Pulsey lost patience now; and her irritation found expression in words. Said Mrs. Pulsey, —

“I declare, this is just a little too much! It is not enough that I should sift the ashes, but that I should have to do it with a broken sieve. I am just tired of this thing, and I shall stand it no longer. I won’t be put on like this by no Josiah Pulsey. I won’t stand such treatment. I won’t stand it a day longer.”

And with the sieve in her hand, anger in her heart, and the tears running down her cheeks, she started in the house to overhaul the recreant, the shamefully neglectful husband.

Mr. Pulsey was in there. He had made ready to go down town to his work. He was slipping on his overcoat in some haste, when a sudden exclamation escaped him, and a scowl settled on his face. Mr. Pulsey had shoved his arm into the sleeve with force enough almost to have made it appear again half way across the street; but yet it did not show itself at the end of the sleeve. It was lodged inside, — lodged in a broken lining. For three weeks this lining had been broken. On every day in that time he had called his wife’s attention to

the fault ; and on each day she promised to attend to it when he came home at night. But the next morning his trusting and shoving hand would fetch up against the same snag. He lost all patience now. A violent imprecation flew from his lips, and his face flushed with anger. He spoke aloud in a voice made harsh with passion : —

“ Hang me, if this isn't carrying things with a pretty high hand ! I wonder what that woman thinks of herself, anyway ! Three weeks ago I told her about that lining ; and she has promised a hundred times to fix it, and it ain't done yet. By George ! if I had a conscience like that, I would trade it off for a screw-driver without any handle, so to say I had *something* — curse me if I wouldn't ! I'll give her a piece of my mind which she *will* understand ! ”

And he started for the yard just as she entered the back-door. They met half way in the kitchen. There was a scowl on his face ; there were tears on hers.

She pushed the broken sieve at him, and impetuously opened her mouth.

“ Josi ” — Then she saw the overcoat with the broken lining, and his name sank from her lips.

Simultaneously he shoved the overcoat towards her, and impetuously opened *his* mouth.

“ Han ” —

Then he saw the sieve with the broken handle, and her name died on his lips.

She was the first to speak.

"Josiah," she said in a subdued voice, "let me take that coat, and mend it.

"Hannah," he rejoined in a softened tone, "give me that sieve till I fix it. You sha'n't sieve the ashes any more."

"Josiah!"

He had started to the door; but he turned on hearing her call. There were tears in her eyes now, fresh tears, but not of passion. Then there was an expression to the face which induced him to step hastily back, put his arm around her, and hide her face for an instant with his own.

AN EXTRAORDINARY STOVE-PIPE.

THE Cobleighs put up the sitting-room stove Thursday. Mr. Cobleigh had been dreading the thing for a month. He wanted to hire a regularly built stove-erector to do the job; but work has been scarce at his shop, and he felt that he could not afford to hire. Mrs. Cobleigh got down the pipe for him from the garret, and helped him to get the stove out of the closet. No accident occurred during these operations. But the unusual circumstance did not encourage Mr. Cobleigh: on the contrary, it inspired him with greater dread. When every thing was in readiness to put up the pipe,

he walked about the machinery with considerable uneasiness, and eyed it with undisguised apprehension. Several times he picked up a link ; and then, while a sudden tremor would flash over his frame, he would drop it again.

"Come," said Mrs. Cobleigh, who, woman-like, knew more than Solomon about putting up a stove, "get to work now. It can be done in a minute if you'll only set right to work at it."

Mr. Cobleigh turned pale.

"Curse this being poor!" he muttered between his clinched teeth.

Then he took hold of the link whose flat end indicated that it belonged to the stove. It sat on its place with the ease of long familiarity. He looked at his wife with a nameless fear on his face. Then he picked up the next link, spread apart his legs, compressed his lips, and proceeded to join it to the other. He had scarcely brought the two ends together when the one slipped over, and enclosed the other. Another link was to be put on before the elbow could be used, and he had to use a chair to reach the place. His face was very white now ; and his limbs trembled to that degree, that he could hardly keep his place on the chair. He took the link into his shaking hands, and raised it to its place. It went on at once. The appearance of his face was simply ghastly now. His lips were ashen ; his eyes flamed with a sickening terror.

"For Heaven's sake, hand me that elbow!" he hoarsely whispered.

His wife promptly complied. But his hand shook to such an extent, that he could not hold it; and it fell to the floor. She picked it up, and again extended it to him.

"For pity sake, Cobleigh, what *is* the matter?" she ejaculated as his deathly face appeared to her.

"Sh! don't speak!" he gasped in a shaking voice.

He applied the elbow. It went on in a flash.

"The other link," he hysterically said with a half-suppressed scream.

Sick at heart with apprehension, and perplexed in mind, the unhappy woman hastened to comply.

Her husband seized the last link. There was not only no color in his face, but his hair stood right up on his head; the perspiration hung in great beads from his forehead; the chair on which he stood fairly rattled beneath the quiver of his person. He raised the link; placed it in position; gave it a push. It went straight to its place; and at the same time he shoved the other end in the chimney-hole.

A short, sharp cry resounded through the room: there was a quick movement of the chair, and the unhappy man lay senseless on the floor. The neighbors were alarmed, and flocked in, and picked him up and laid him on the bed, while a doctor was

sent for, and restoratives actively applied. But it was several hours before he returned to full consciousness. The shock to his nervous system had been very, very great. The first words he gave utterance to were addressed to his wife, —

“Was it all a fearful dream, Matilda?”

“What, John?” asked the fond wife.

“The stove, the sitting-room stove. Is it up?”

“Why, yes, John. It is up.”

“Did — did I do it?”

“Yes, John, you did it.”

He put the trembling hands over the white face, and burst into tears.

AN EMINENTLY THOUGHTFUL HUSBAND.

HE was a wonderfully practical man, and she was marvellously poetical. To her, life had been a dream edged with gold, and filled in with the loveliest of roseate hues. But to him had appeared every thing in the homespun garb of every-day life. He is a country merchant, and buys his goods in New York. His partner always went to the city on business connected with the grocery; but the partner was recently taken ill, and our extremely practical friend was obliged to go. It was his first visit to the great city, and he was to be gone three days. It was a momentous event to his fond wife. Do the best she could, her mind was

troubled with forebodings. It is difficult to tell just exactly how he felt ; but, while it was evident he realized the importance of the step he was about to take, still he never lost sight of the fact that a mighty responsibility was resting on his shoulders, and that all private emotion must be subserved to public interests. His carpet-bag was packed, and his hand on the door to pass out of the house, when she bade him good-by. She put both arms about his neck.

“John,” she sobbed, “you are going away.”

This was so palpable, that it would have been madness to attempt a denial : so he merely observed, —

“Look out for my collar, Maria.”

“You will think of your wife while you are gone?” she whispered huskily.

He was a trifle nervous under the pressure of her arms upon his collar ; but he spoke re-assuringly, —

“I will bear it in mind, my dear.”

“You will think of me as mourning your absence, and anxiously awaiting your return?” she murmured.

“You can trust me to attend to it,” he replied, with as much firmness as if it had been a request for six barrels of mackerel.

“And you’ll be very careful of yourself for my sake?” she suggested in a broken voice.

"I will see it attended to, my dear. But it is almost time for the train;" and he gravely sought to remove her arms from his neck.

"John, John!" she convulsively cried, "don't forget me, *don't* forget me!"

"Maria," he said with a tinge of reproach in his tone, "I have made a memorandum to that effect."

And then she let him go, still tearful, but confident "it would be attended to."

STRIKING A BONANZA.

A GENTLEMAN named Parkington, living on Mulford Street, was awakened from a sound sleep on Friday night by a heavy knocking on not only his front-door, but over the entire front of the house. It was a violent slamming, and calculated to awake even a boy. Mr. Parkington got out of bed, and hurried to his window which faced the street. He looked out upon a spectacle that brought a countless host of goose-pimples to his legs, and filled him with unbounded astonishment. A man, a stranger, with a long pole in his hand, was slapping it against the front of the building. As soon as Mr. Parkington could recover his senses, he shouted to the party below, —

"Who are you? What are you doing that for?"

The striking ceased at once. The stranger

brought the pole to a rest at his side, and touched his hat with true military etiquette; and the face that was turned up to Mr. Parkington was rugged in feature, bronzed by the weather, but beaming in expression.

"Well, what is it?" asked Mr. Parkington after a moment of hesitation, in which he saw that the face was not that of a bad man.

"Oh! you are there, are you?" asked the stranger.

"Certainly," replied Mr. Parkington in a tone of confidence.

"You will pardon me, I hope," said the stranger, smiling agreeably, "for awaking you at this unseemly hour?"

Mr. Parkington was prone to grant the pardon; but his eye caught sight of the pole, and he hesitated.

"What did you make such a row for?" he asked.

"Oh! that was merely a matter of ceremony," explained the stranger. "I could have aroused you at the door; but I know your position in society" (Mr. Parkington keeps a feed-store), "and I wanted to show you a little distinction."

"Who are you?" asked Mr. Parkington in a softened voice.

"I am an American," was the reply, distinctly uttered.

"What do you want?"

"Would you like to make five hundred thousand dollars?" was the somewhat startling interrogation.

"Five hundred thousand dollars?" repeated Mr. Parkington in astonishment.

"Yes, sir; that's what I said," replied the stranger. "An outlay of fifty dollars, with judgment, will accomplish this fortune. I have got the whole secret and the judgment; and, if you can raise the fifty dollars, I will let you go in with me; and the thing is done, — the half million dollars is ours."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Mr. Parkington in some bewilderment.

"You know Stanley is in Africa, looking for the sources of the Nile?"

"Yes; but" —

"All right, don't interrupt me. There is a world-wide interest in the subject; and, when Stanley finds the source of that mysterious river, there are going to be millions of people flock there. Now, what I propose to you, if you have got fifty dollars to put into the enterprise, is this, that we both go there as soon as convenient, and start an eating-saloon. What do you say?"

Within the brief space of thirty seconds, a man with a pair of pants held on to him by clutching the waistband with one hand, while the other clinched a club, was coming off the front-stoop like a whirlwind, while the projector of an eating-

saloon in Africa was scampering out of the gate with no less enthusiasm.

A SORE TROUBLE.

THERE is nothing flat and monotonous about a broken lining to a coat-sleeve. It always comes up as fresh and vivacious as at the first. A man appears about as surprised when he runs his hand into the slit the tenth time as he did the first; and when he looks to see his hand appear at the end, and finds that it is doubled up in the middle of the sleeve, his countenance will assume as much interest as if the occurrence was something never before heard of. It is astonishing, in this connection, that a broken sleeve-lining rarely happens in the right sleeve. This is because, perhaps, that the right arm is first inserted. A broken sleeve-lining can only appear to advantage in one position; and that is when the man has one arm inserted correctly, the coat in a wad against the back of his head, and his body bent over in the effort to shove the remaining arm through. It is at this, the most painful juncture, that his attention is called to the rent lining. In a constrained voice he directs the notice of his wife to the same, with a partly stifled inquiry as to what on earth she has been doing, that the trouble has not been remedied

before. It is like a woman on such an occasion to say that he won't leave his coat home so that it can be fixed. It takes a woman to think of exasperating things. The only resort now left to him is to declare that he knows better. Then she says, if he will take the coat off now, she will fix it, and makes a show of getting a thread and needle. She knows he won't take it off and wait. And he don't. A man may have a broken sleeve-lining, and a slit in his trousers, as long as fifteen minutes at a railway station ; but he knows the propriety of things.

MR. COVILLE PROVES MATHEMATICS.

THERE are men who dispute what they do not understand. Mr. Coville is such a man. When he heard a carpenter say that there were so many shingles on the roof of his house, because the roof contained so many square feet, Coville doubted the figures ; and, when the carpenter went away, he determined to test the matter by going up on the roof and counting them. And he went up there. He squeezed through the scuttle, — Coville weighs two hundred and thirty, — and then sat down on the roof, and worked his way carefully and deliberately toward the gutter. When he got part way down, he heard a sound between him and the shingles, and became aware that there was an interfer-

ence some way in his further locomotion. He tried to turn over, and crawl back ; but the obstruction held him. Then he tried to move along a little, in hopes that the trouble would prove but temporary ; but an increased sound convinced him that either a nail or a sliver had hold of his cloth, and that, if he would save any of it, he must use caution. His folks were in the house ; but he could not make them hear ; and, besides, he didn't want to attract the attention of the neighbors. So he sat there until after dark, and thought. It would have been an excellent opportunity to have counted the shingles ; but he neglected to use it. His mind appeared to run into other channels. He sat there an hour after dark, seeing no one he could notify of his position. Then he saw two boys approach the gate from the house, and, reaching there, stop. It was light enough for him to see that one of the two was his son ; and although he objected to having the other boy know of his misfortune, yet he had grown tired of holding on to the roof, and concluded he could bribe the strange boy into silence. With this arrangement mapped out, he took out his knife, and threw it so that it would strike near to the boys, and attract their attention. It struck nearer than he anticipated ; in fact, it struck so close as to hit the strange boy on the head, and nearly brain him. As soon as he recovered his equilibrium, he turned on Coville's boy, who, he was confident, had attempted

to kill him, and introduced some astonishment and bruises into his face. Then he threw him down, and kicked him in the side, and banged him on the head, and drew him over into the gutter, and pounded his legs; and then hauled him back to the walk again, and knocked his head against the gate. And, all the while, the elder Coville sat on the roof, and screamed for the police, but couldn't get away. And then Mrs. Coville dashed out with a broom, and contributed a few novel features to the affair at the gate; and one of the boarders dashed out with a double-barrel gun, and, hearing the cries from the roof, looked up there, and, espying a figure which was undoubtedly a burglar, drove a handful of shot into its legs. With a howl of agony, Coville made a plunge to dodge the missiles, freed himself from the nail, lost his hold to the roof, and went sailing down the shingles with awful velocity, both legs spread out, his hair on end, and his hands making desperate but fruitless efforts to save himself. He tried to swear, but was so frightened that he lost his power of speech; and, when he passed over the edge of the roof with twenty feet of tin gutter hitched to him, the boarder gave him the contents of the other barrel, and then drove into the house to load up again. The unfortunate Coville struck into a cherry-tree, and thence bounded to the ground, where he was recognized, picked up by the assembled neighbors, and carried into the

house. A new doctor is making good day wages picking the shot out of his legs. The boarder has gone into the country to spend the summer; and the junior Coville, having sequestered a piece of brick in his handkerchief, is lying low for that other boy. He says, that, before the calm of another sabbath rests on New England, there will be another boy in Danbury who can't wear a cap.

A FEMALE PRANK.

WHEN a woman puts three mackerel to soak over night in a dish-pan whose sides are eight inches high, and leaves the pan on a stairway, she has accomplished her mission, and should go hence. This was what a Division-street woman did Friday night,—filled the pan at the pump, and then left it standing on the steps to the stoop, while she went into the next house to see how many buttons would be required to go down the front of a redingote. And a mighty important affair that was, to be sure. And there was her husband tearing through the house in search of a handkerchief, and not finding it, of course. And then he rushed out into the yard, wondering where on earth that woman could be; and started down the steps without seeing the pan, or even dreaming that any one could be so idiotic as to leave it there. Of course

ne stepped on it ; or at least that is the supposition, as the neighbors who were brought out by the crash that followed saw a horrified man and three very demoralized mackerel shooting across the garden, and smashing down the shrubbery. And he was a nice sight, was that unhappy man, when they got him on his feet. There wasn't a dry thread on him ; and his hair was full of bits of mackerel ; and one of his shoulders was out of joint ; and his coat was split the whole length of the back ; and he appeared to be out of his head. He was carried in the house by some of the men, and laid on a bed, while others went after a doctor ; and sixteen women assembled in the front-room, and talked in whispers about the inscrutable ways of Providence, and what a warning this was to people who never looked where they were going.

A STARTLING AFFAIR.

A HORSE attached to the cart of a tin-peddler, while on Balmforth Avenue, Friday, became startled, and ran away at a speed that was marvellous in a tin-peddler's horse. The wagon was old and rickety ; and the horse did not appear to be in a better condition of repairs : but both of them got through that avenue with awful velocity ; the former hooping its spine, and shaking its head, and throw-

ing its heels uproariously ; while the latter reeled from one side the road to the other, and bounded from rut to rut, and threw an invoice of old junk and new tinware at every heave. One old lady was caught around the neck by a pair of satinet pants, and nearly choked to death; and a hoop-skirt, badly damaged, descended over the head of a man who was telling a neighbor what his mother rubbed on sprains, and so frightened him, that he fell over a barrel, and put both his ankles out of joint, and was bit on the shoulder by the dog of the man he was trying to benefit. The horse, having filled the air with boilers, and old vests, and flatirons, and worthless overalls, and brass kettles, and broken-down gaiters, suddenly fetched up by jumping off the bridge, and into the river, dragging the wagon and a moth-eaten undershirt in after it.

COVILLE CONVALESCES.

SINCE the unfortunate accident to Mr. Coville while on the roof counting the shingles, he has been obliged to keep pretty close to the house. Last Wednesday, he went out in the yard for the first time ; and on Friday Mrs. Coville got him an easy-chair, which proved a great comfort to him. It is one of those chairs that can be moved by the occupant to form almost any position by means

of ratchets. Mr. Coville was very much pleased with this new contrivance, and, the first afternoon, did nothing but sit in it, and work it all ways. He said such a chair as that did more good in this world than a hundred sermons. He had it in his room,—the front bed-room up stairs; and there he would sit and look out of the window, and enjoy himself as much as a man can whose legs have been ventilated with shot. Monday afternoon he got in the chair as usual. Mrs. Coville was out in the back-yard, hanging up clothes; and the son was across the street, drawing a lath along a picket-fence. Sitting down, he grasped the sides of the chair with both hands to settle it back, when the whole thing gave way, and Mr. Coville came violently to the floor. For an instant, the unfortunate gentleman was benumbed by the suddenness of the shock; but the next, he was aroused by an acute pain in each arm; and the great drops of sweat oozed from his forehead when he found that the little finger of each hand had caught in the ratchets, and was as firmly held as if in a vice. There he lay on his back, with the end of a round sticking in his side, and both hands perfectly powerless. The least move of his body aggravated the pain, which was chasing up his arms. He screamed for help: but Mrs. Coville was in the back-yard, telling Mrs. Coney, next door, that she didn't know what

Coville would do without that chair; and so she didn't hear him. He pounded the floor with his stockinged feet: but the younger Coville was still drawing emotion from that fence across the way; and all other sounds were rapidly sinking into insignificance. Besides, Mr. Coville's legs were not sufficiently recovered from the late accident to permit their being profitably used as mallets. How he did despise that offspring! and how fervently he did wish the owner of that fence would light on that boy, and reduce him to powder! Then he screamed again, and howled, and shouted "Maria!" But there was no response. What if he should die there alone, and in that awful shape? The perspiration started afresh, and the pain in his arms assumed an awful magnitude. Again he shrieked "Maria!" but the *matinée* across the way only grew in volume; and the unconscious wife had gone into Mrs. Coney's, and was trying on that lady's redingote. Then he prayed, and howled, and coughed, and swore, and then apologized for it, and prayed and howled again, and screamed at the top of his voice the awfulest things he would do to that boy, if Heaven would only spare him, and show him an axe. Then he opened his mouth for one final shriek; when the door opened, and Mrs. Coville appeared with a smile on her face, and Mrs. Coney's redingote on her back. In one glance, she saw that something

awful had happened to Joseph ; and, with wonderful presence of mind, she screamed for help, and then fainted away, and ploughed headlong into his stomach. Fortunately, the blow deprived him of speech, else he might have said something that he would ever have regretted ; and, before he could regain his senses, Mrs. Coney dashed in, and removed the grief-stricken wife. But it required a blacksmith to cut Coville loose. He is again back in bed, with his mutilated fingers resting on pillows ; and there he lies all day, concocting new forms of death for the inventor of that chair, and hoping nothing will happen to his son until he can get well enough to administer it himself.

A SERENADING CATASTROPHE.

THOSE of our readers acquainted on Monson Street will remember that the roof to Mr. Forceps's saloon adjoins his house, and is approached by two windows. One of these windows is in Mr. Forceps's bedroom. On this roof Mrs. Forceps has spread hesitating tomatoes with a view to hastening their ripeness. Last Wednesday she put five more with their fellows, making thirty in all. The Forcepses have a niece visiting with them, — a young lady named Hall, of Thomaston. She has made the acquaintance of many of our young people ; and

on Wednesday night several of them got together to give her a serenade. Providing themselves with requisite instruments, the young men took up a position near this addition we speak of, and struck up on the instruments. Mrs. Forceps was first awakened by the music, and nudged her husband. He also awoke. The music was grand, — not loud or coarse, but soft, low, and harmonious. Mr. Forceps was very much pleased, and got up to the window to hear it. Then Mrs. Forceps got up also, and, retying her night-cap, stood beside Forceps. "They're serenading Ellen," said she. "I know it," said Forceps. "Who can they be?" she asked. "I don't know, I'm sure," said he; "but I suppose I could find out if I could creep out on the roof and look over." — "Why don't you?" said she, her curiosity increasing. "I'm afraid they might see me," he said. "I don't think they would," she said. "They wouldn't be looking up on the roof, would they?" Mr. Forceps thought a moment, and then concluded no one could see him, as the moon had gone into a bank of clouds, and objects were quite dim. And then he softly opened the blind, and cautiously crawled out on the shingles, completely incased in red flannel under-clothes and a night-cap of the same rich material. The music still continued, coming up through the night-air in waves of ecstatic harmony. Mr. Forceps sat down on the roof, and

laboriously worked his way to the eaves. Then he lifted himself up to turn over and look down ; and just then he stepped on something soft and yielding, felt his feet give, made a desperate clutch at the shingles, was too late, gave a piercing shriek, and shot off the roof, and went revolving and howling in among the band, followed by the tomatoes, and madly cleaving the air with his red-flannel limbs. He struck on his back on the bass-viol, and with one leg tore the entrails from an accordion, and with the other knocked all the keys from a silver-mounted flute. The man who played the bass-viol was driven senseless into a pile of pea-brush ; and the flute-player, with his mouth full of blood and splinters, jumped over the fence, and fled. What became of the others Mr. Forceps does not know, he being too busily engaged in getting on his feet, and into the house, to make a critical examination of the field. It is presumed the bass-viol man died on the spot, and was surreptitiously removed and buried by his companions, as there was no sign of him about the premises in the morning.

OWNING A COW.

THE man across the way, who enjoyed vegetables fresh from his own garden through the summer, has bought a cow. His wife told him how nice it

would be to have a cow on the premises, so as to have milk fresh and pure every day, and always in time, and always in abundance. Then they could make butter themselves, and not eat the rank stuff out of the store. She told him there was enough stuff from the garden and table to almost keep the cow; and the product would be just about so much clear gain. He figured it up himself with a pencil, and the result surprised him. He wondered why he had not kept a cow before, and inwardly condemned himself for the loss he had been inflicting upon himself. Then he bought a cow. In the evening of its arrival he went out to milk it; but the animal was excited by the strange surroundings, and stepped on our friend, and kicked over his pail, and nearly knocked one of his eyes out with her tail. He worked at the experiment for an hour, but without any success. Then his wife came out to give advice, and his son came out to see the fun. The cow put one of her heels through the woman's dress, and knocked the boy down in the mud, which ended their interest in the matter. One of the neighbors milked the animal that night, and came around the next morning and showed the man how to do it. The third day the cow escaped the surveillance of the boy who was left to watch her; and, when the man came home at night, she was nowhere to be found. The boy had also disappeared, and our neighbor found he was obliged

to hunt her up before supper. He walked around for a while, and then returned home; but the animal had not been seen. Then he went off again, and made a very thorough search; and about ten o'clock that night he came back with the cow, his clothes begrimed with perspiration and dust, and his face flushed and scratched. He wanted to kick the animal's ribs in; but, realizing that such a course would result in pecuniary damage, he changed his mind. The boy wishes he had obeyed the first impulse. On the fourth day they churned, so as to have fresh butter for the table. The mother took hold of the dasher first, because, she said, she used to do it when a girl, and liked no better sport. She pounded away until she caught a crick in the back that doubled her up like a knife; and then she put the heir to it. He had been standing around, eagerly waiting for a chance, and grumbling because he didn't get it; and, when the dasher was placed in his hand, he was so happy he could hardly contain himself. He pumped away for an hour at it; then he said, if he had to do it any more, he would run away and be a robber. At noon the man came home, and learned the situation. He was a little disgusted at the "tomfoolery," as he called it, and took hold the churn himself, and made it bounce for a while. Then his stomach commenced to fall in, and his spine to unjoint, and his shoulders to loosen. He stopped

and wiped off the perspiration, and looked around with a melancholy cast to his features, and went at it again. The butter didn't come, however ; but every thing in the way of oratorical effect did. He got so dreadfully excited, that his wife, smelling strong of camphor, took the dasher away from him, and went to work herself. At this the son put his cap under his jacket, and miraculously disappeared. Later in the day, the milk was poured around the grape-vine. On the fifth day the cow knocked down a length of fence to the next lot, and ate all the oranges from a tree that stood in a tub ; and, when the people attempted to drive her out, she carried away a new ivy on her horns, knocked down a valuable vase of flowers, and capped the climax by stumbling over a box of mosses, and falling on a pile of hot-house frames. On the sixth day our neighbor sold his cow to a butcher, and now eats strong butter which comes from the store.

AN ASTONISHING CURE.

HERE is something remarkable. A woman in New Haven was recently bereft of her scalp by the idiosyncrasies of a shaft and belt. The doctors saw, that, to remedy the evil, they would have to have recourse to transplanting ; and so they actually succeeded in getting a sufficient number

of pieces from other people's heads to give this unfortunate woman a new scalp. We hope those New-Haven doctors used more discretion than did he who attended a man named Finlay, who met with a similar accident in Oriskany, N.Y., some thirteen years ago. Bits of scalp from seventeen different persons were secured by this doctor, and adroitly stitched to the head of Mr. Finlay. When it was done, people came miles to see Finlay's head; and Finlay himself, with his checker-board cranium, was the happiest man in Oriskany. But when the capillary glands got in working-order, and the hair commenced to grow, the top of that man's head presented the most extraordinary spectacle on record. The doctor, who was about half the time in liquor, had consulted expediency rather than judgment, and secured that new scalp without any reference to future developments. We never saw any thing like it. Here was a tuft of yellow hair, and next to it a bit of black, and then a flame of red, and a little like silk, and more like tow, with brown hair, and gray hair, and sandy hair, and cream-colored hair, scattered over his entire skull. And what a mad man that Finlay was! and nobody could blame him. He would stand up against the barn for an hour at a time, and sob and swear. It was very fortunate that the doctor was dead. He went off two weeks before with blue ague, which is a mild sort of disease. Finlay kept his

hair cut short ; but that didn't make any difference. Then he tried dyes ; but they only made matters worse. Then he got a wig, and this covered up the deformity ; but sometimes at church he would get asleep, and the wig would fall off, and make the children cry. Once, at the county fair, he fell asleep, and the wig dropped off ; and the committee on domestic goods, when they came around, stood in front of Finlay's head for some five minutes rapt in delight. They then immediately decided that it was the most ingenious piece of patchwork in the list, and never discovered the mistake until they attempted to pin the premium card to it. At that Finlay awoke, and knocked down the chairman of the committee, and chased the others out of the building. We hope those New-Haven doctors have been more particular, as it is not a subject to trifle with.

THE HARBISONS' BABY.

MR. and MRS. HARBISON had just finished their breakfast. Mr. Harbison had pushed back, and was looking under the lounge for his boots. Mrs. Harbison sat at the table, holding the infant Harbison, and mechanically working her fore-finger in its mouth. Suddenly she paused in the motion, threw the astonished child on its back, turned as white as a sheet, pried open its mouth, and imme

diately gasped, "Ephraim!" Mr. Harbison, who was on his knees, with his head under the lounge, at once came forth, rapping his head sharply on the side of the lounge as he did so, and, getting on his feet, inquired what was the matter. "O Ephraim!" said she, the tears rolling down her cheeks, and the smiles coursing up. "Why, what is it, Armethea?" said the astonished Mr. Harbison, smartly rubbing his head where it had come in contact with the lounge. "Baby" — she gasped. Mr. Harbison turned pale, and commenced to sweat. "Baby has — Oh, oh, oh, Ephraim! Baby has — baby has got a tooth!" — "No!" screamed Mr. Harbison, spreading his legs apart, dropping his chin, and staring at the struggling heir with all his might. "I tell you it is," persisted Mrs. Harbison, with a slight evidence of hysteria. "Oh, oh, it can't be!" protested Mr. Harbison, preparing to swear if it wasn't. "Come here and see for yourself," said Mrs. Harbison. "Open its 'ittle mousy wousy for its own muzzer; that's a toody woody; that's a b'essed 'ittle 'ump o' sugar." Thus conjured, the heir opened its mouth sufficiently for the author of its being to thrust in his finger; and that gentleman, having convinced himself by the most indubitable evidence that a tooth was there, immediately kicked his hat across the room, buried his fist in the lounge, and declared with much feeling and vehemence that he could lick the indi-

vidual who would dare to intimate that he was not the happiest man on the face of the earth. Then he gave Mrs. Harbison a hearty smack on the mouth, and snatched up the heir; while that lady rushed tremblingly forth after Mrs. Simmons, who lived next door. In a moment, Mrs. Simmons came tearing in as if she had been shot out of a gun; and right behind her came Mrs. Harbison at a speed that indicated she had been ejected from two guns. Mrs. Simmons at once snatched the heir from the arms of Mr. Harbison, and hurried it to the window, where she made a careful and critical examination of its mouth; while Mrs. Harbison held its head, and tried to still the throbbings of her heart; and Mr. Harbison danced up and down, and snapped his fingers, to show how calm he was. It having been ascertained by Mrs. Simmons that the tooth was a sound one, and also that the strongest hopes for its future could be entertained on account of its coming in the new of the moon, Mrs. Harbison got out the necessary material, and Mr. Harbison at once proceeded to write seven different letters to as many persons, unfolding to them the event of the morning, and inviting them to come on as soon as possible.

MR. COVILLE RENEWS HIS SINGING.

THAT is a very beautiful story of the clergyman who visited an insane-asylum, and was attacked by a maniac, but who broke into a song, and sang it so clearly and sweetly, that the maniac was subdued ; and, when he stopped from exhaustion, the maniac cried for more, and he sang more ; and the maniac gave up. This story made a very strong impression on Mr. Coville of this village ; and, the more he thought of it, the more he was impressed by it. A day or two after reading this beautiful story, Mr. Coville's boy caught a boy named Phillips near the foundry, and filled his hair with tar. The boy went straight home, of course, with his shocking-looking head ; and, as his home is on the same street as that of the Covilles, Mr. Phillips hurried there at once. He vociferated into Mr. Coville's ear the cause of his visit, and requested that Master Coville be passed out, and cut up between them. Mr. Coville expressed his indignation at the outrage his son had committed, and promised to punish him severely for it. But this was not what Mr. Phillips wanted. Instead of comforting him, the promise appeared to irritate him. He danced out to the walk, and clutched an imaginary boy by the hair, and struck an imaginary boy in the face with a ferocity that was dreadful, and then danced back again, and howled for Master Coville to be brought

out. Mr. Coville was frightened at his vehemence, and sought by all the powers of persuasive oratory to soothe him ; but he was not to be quelled. At every fresh argument he repeated his singular demonstration, with such intimidating additions as snapping his fingers, and shaking his fist in the face of his neighbor. Having exhausted his reasoning, and Phillips becoming more inflamed all the while, Mr. Coville was about to beat a retreat for the safety of his own person, when the beautiful story of the clergyman and the maniac suddenly flashed into his mind. Here was sure and unexpected relief. Mr. Phillips had danced down to the walk, and was dancing back, with a half-dozen imaginary boys in tow, whom he was belaboring in a most murderous manner ; but Mr. Coville did not mind him. He felt that he had the turbulent mass of passion within his control ; and, as he realized his power, a faint smile of triumph and pleasure stole into his face. Then he began to sing. It is years since Mr. Coville indulged in the luxury of vocal music, and his catalogue of pieces is neither large nor varied ; but he took up the first one that presented itself, and rolled it out. It was "A Life on the Ocean Wave," — a very pretty piece, and quite popular when Mr. Coville retired from singing. It is a long time, as we have said, since Mr. Coville had occasion to use his voice ; and it worked a trifle awkward and uneven at first : but

he remembered that his purpose was a noble one, and he did not shrink from criticism. As he advanced in the song, he was pleased, but not surprised, to see Phillips first stare at him, then drop his hands at his side, and afterward draw back, and look around, as if he were planning an escape. But Mr. Coville did not stop: he gathered strength as he proceeded; and turning his eyes to heaven, and keeping time with his feet, roared along through the measure with amazing force. He had got up on the highest note he could find, and was bursting into a perfect apoplectic howl of melody, when he felt himself caught abruptly by the collar, and the next instant was made aware that he was on his back on the walk, and that a man looking dreadfully like Phillips was pounding his head against the frozen ground, and doing something with his ribs that appeared to be uncalled for. Then he felt himself slide through a planing-mill, and, opening his eyes, saw that Phillips was gone, and that Mrs. Coville was trying to get him on his feet. In this direction he gave her all the help possible, and, getting up, looked around for the planing-mill, but, not seeing it, allowed her to lead him into the house. To all her questions she could get no answer; but occasionally, while she was applying the liniment, he would start up with "A Life on the Ocean," and then suddenly stop, smile faintly, and softly rub his nose.

It was several hours before he acted natural again ; but aside from conceding that possibly Phillips didn't have the right kind of madness, or he himself may not have got hold of the right tune, he shows no disposition to converse on the matter. Sunday afternoon, young Coville, to be smart, and thinking that his father was asleep in the chair, undertook to start the tune for the edification of his mother ; and the futility of that air for enchaining an audience was again demonstrated in a most signal manner.

A PROGRESSIVE WOMAN.

WE are inclined to think Danbury has made a stride in the matter of woman's rights that will astonish everybody, and edify many. We have a woman who butchers. We might have worked around to this declaration in an elaborate and interesting introduction ; but the fact is so amazing, that we could not write with any calmness, or think with any precision, with it staring at us. This young lady is about to marry ; that is, she is engaged : and a woman in Redding is weaving her a rag carpet. As nothing more confirmatory than this can be produced, we feel safe in affirming that she is about to marry. The object of her choice is a farmer. The farmer does his own killing, as all well-informed farmers do. The young lady is

aware of this fact ; and, in her strong devotion to the farmer, she is learning to butcher. Every Friday afternoon, she accompanies one of our butchers, a personal friend, to the slaughter. Here, with her dress pinned up, her sleeves rolled, and her hat very much on one side of her head, she flits about in the midst of the thrilling gore, and unimpassioned tallow, and so forth. She has already killed four lambs, cutting their throats so artistically as to charm the burly butcher beyond all description, and to fill every well-balanced mind with reverential admiration. Next Friday she tries her maiden hand on a small calf, and expects to extract the vital spark from its body in a way that will win its eternal gratitude. In dressing bullocks — or rather in undressing them — she is becoming quite an adept ; and already excels the butcher's boy, who has been in the business for nearly a year. But she particularly shines when the animal's throat is cut, and with the animal's tail in her hand, and her neatly gaitered foot on the animal's side, she pumps the life-current out of the dying body. The butcher says she looks like an angel then ; and we can readily understand how she does. In a week or two she will try her hand at knocking down a bullock, and will be successful, without doubt. But we hope, and we are unselfish in the expression of it, that the laurels she is winning will not turn her head, and fill her with aspirations above her station.

It will be a sad day for the farmer if success thus affects her: it will be a worse day for her. Better that she had never known the delicious sensation of prodding a lamb's throat, or the wondrous power of pumping gore. But we envy the young farmer the mellow Sunday evenings in her society, the beaming of her slaughter-house eyes, and her tender discourse upon hides, leaf-lard, tripe, plucks, and other bits of scenery. To press the lips which have caressed a gory knife, and to clasp the delicate fingers which have ploughed through the steaming contents of a defunct animal, is an ecstasy that no one can calmly contemplate—on a full stomach.

NOT AS HIS MOTHER DID.

No man shows his insignificance and utter uselessness about the house to such a degree as when his wife is mopping up. He feels this, and so does she; and he knows she feels it, which is worse still. To offer an adverse remark on such an occasion is about as insane an enterprise as an individual can embark upon. But a Patch-street man did it Saturday. His wife was mopping the kitchen-floor, and he was moving about the room to keep out of the way of the wet mop, when he unhappily observed that that wasn't the way his mother did it. It was done in a flash. There was a sharp report, as if three

pounds of very wet and very dirty cloths had settled across a human face ; and in the same instant a man went over a chair, and half way under a table, looking very much as if a mud volcano had kicked him in the head.

AFTER THE FUNERAL.

It was just after the funeral. The bereaved and subdued widow, enveloped in millinery gloom, was seated in the sitting-room with a few sympathizing friends. There was that constrained look so peculiar to the occasion observable on every countenance. The widow sighed.

"How do you feel, my dear?" observed her sister.

"Oh! I don't know," said the poor woman, with difficulty restraining her tears. "But I hope every thing passed off well."

"Indeed it did," said all the ladies.

"It was as large and respectable a funeral as I have seen this winter," said the sister, looking around upon the others.

"Yes, it was," said the lady from next door. "I was saying to Mrs. Slocum, only ten minutes ago, that the attendance couldn't have been better, — the bad going considered."

"Did you see the Taylors?" asked the widow faintly, looking at her sister. "They go so rarely to funerals, that I was quite surprised to see them here."

"Oh, yes! the Taylors were all here," said the sympathizing sister. "As you say, they go but a little: they are *so* exclusive!"

"I thought I saw the Curtises also," suggested the bereaved woman droopingly.

"Oh, yes!" chimed in several. "They came in their own carriage too," said the sister animatedly. "And then there were the Randalls, and the Van Rensselaers. Mrs. Van Rensselaer had her cousin from the city with her; and Mrs. Randall wore a very heavy black silk, which I am sure was quite new. Did you see Col. Haywood and his daughters, love?"

"I thought I saw them; but I wasn't sure. They were here, then, were they?"

"Yes, indeed!" said they all again; and the lady who lived across the way observed, —

"The colonel was very sociable, and inquired most kindly about you, and the sickness of your husband."

The widow smiled faintly. She was gratified by the interest shown by the colonel.

The friends-now rose to go, each bidding her good-by, and expressing the hope that she would be calm. Her sister bowed them out. When she returned, she said, —

"You can see, my love, what the neighbors think of it. I wouldn't have had any thing unfortunate happen for a good deal. But nothing did. The arrangements couldn't have been better."

"I think some of the people in the neighborhood must have been surprised to see so many of the up-town people here," suggested the afflicted woman, trying to look hopeful.

"You may be quite sure of that," asserted the sister. "I could see that plain enough by their looks."

"Well, I am glad there is no occasion for talk," said the widow, smoothing the skirt of her dress.

And after that the boys took the chairs home, and the house was put in order.

At a recent political caucus in Danbury, one of the members was on the floor, lining out a bold, aggressive policy for the campaign, when a little boy pulled him by the coat, and said in quite audible tones, —

"Ma says, that, if you don't hurry home with them prunes, she'll lock the door, an' you'll have to sleep in the street."

"Gentlemen," said the orator, picking up his hat, "I'll just step around among the people to feel the public pulse, and will meet you on the gory field of battle."

Then he hurried home with the prunes.

A SMART WOMAN.

LADIES who have husbands who are neglectful in supplying them with kindlings should carefully study the experience of a Division-street sister. All her married life she has had an unbroken struggle with her husband to keep herself supplied with wood, and the greater part of the time she has been obliged to depend upon her own deftness with the axe ; and any one who has seen a woman handle an axe knows what a dreadful thing it is. Two months ago, she begged of him not to go away without leaving her some kindlings. He said he wouldn't ; but he finally did. Then she hit upon a plan. She had four dozen clothes-pins. She took one dozen of them for starting the fire, and found they worked admirably. The next day she used another dozen ; and so she continued, until the four dozen were gone. Then she went to the store, and purchased another four dozen, having them "put in the bill." When they were gone, she repeated the errand. She said no more to him about kindlings. For ten years she had kept up the battle ; and now she was tired and sick at heart. He could go his own way, and she would go hers, patiently, uncomplainingly, until the end would come.

On Monday he signified at the store that he would like to settle his account. The bill was

made out, and handed him. He glanced down the items. As he advanced along the column, his face began to work. First his eyes slowly enlarged; then his mouth gradually opened, caused by the drooping of his lower jaw; and wrinkles formed on his forehead. One-third down the column, he formed his lips as if to whistle. Four lines below, he did whistle. Half way down he said, —

“Gra-cious!”

A little farther on he said, —

“Thunder!”

Four more lines were taken in, and he spoke again, —

“By the Jumping Jupiter!”

Then he read on, smiting his thigh vigorously, and giving vent to various expressions of the liveliest nature. Finally he threw the bill down.

“I say, Benson, look here. This bill can’t be mine: you’ve got me mixed up with some laundry.”

“That’s your bill, sir,” said the grocer, smiling pleasantly.

“I tell you it can’t be,” persisted the Division-street man, beginning to look scared. “Why, here’s fifty-five dozen clothes-pins in a two-months’ bill. What on earth do you take me for, — a four-story laundry?”

“But it is your bill. Your wife can explain it to you. She ordered the pins.”

"My wife!" gasped the unfortunate man.

"Yes, sir."

The debtor clutched the bill, jammed it into his pocket, and hurried straight home. He bolted into the house without any abatement of speed, and, flinging the paper on the table before his wife, knocked his hat on the back of his head, and said, —

"Martha Ann Johnson, what does this mean? There are fifty-five dozen clothes-pins in Benson's bill for the past two months; and he says you ordered every blessed one of them."

"And so I did," said she demurely.

"W-h-at! fifty-five dozen clothes-pins in two months!" and he shot down into a chair as if a freight-car had fallen atop of him. "Fifty-five dozen clothes-pins in two months!" he howled. "Will a just Heaven stand that?"

"I tell you, you needn't stare at me that way, Reuben Wheeler Johnson, nor go to calling onto Heaven with your impiousness. I ordered them clothes-pins myself; and I have burnt every one of 'em in that there stove, just because you were too all-fired lazy to get a stick of wood. And I declare, before I'll be bothered jawing and fighting to get you to cut wood, I'll burn up every clothes-pin in the land; and you shall pay for them, if you have to sell the shirt on your back to do it. So now!"

And Mrs. Johnson, with a face like scarlet,

snatched up the broom, and went to sweeping the carpet as if every flake of dust was a red-hot coal ; while the unhappy Mr. Johnson hastened to the store, and paid the bill ; and before dark, that night, he had a half-cord of wood sawed, split, and piled up ready for use.

A DANBURY SPELLING-SCHOOL.

AN impromptu spelling-school was inaugurated in Merrill's grocery Saturday evening. A young man, who last winter aided Mr. Couch in the management of the North Centre School, conducted the class. The first word he gave out was *Indian*.

The first man said, " I-n, in, d-i-n, din, — Indin."

The teacher shook his head. " Well, I declare ! I thot I had it," said the speller with keen disappointment ; but he picked up when the second man started, and eyed him with considerable anxiety.

The next man with desperate earnestness said, " I-n, in, d-e, de, inde, u-n, un, — Indeun."

Then he sighed, and gazed anxiously at the teacher ; while an old party at the end of the bench, who was watching the efforts with derisive amusement, turned the quid in his mouth, and said, —

" You ain't in a rod on't. But go on : let's see more try."

The teacher told the second speller that he, also, had failed ; whereupon he sighed again.

Then the third man took hold. He squared himself upon his seat, and, holding up one finger, ticked off the letters with becoming solemnity, as follows: "I-n, in, d-d-d-a, da, inda, — i-n, in, — Indain."

The old party on the end of the bench, who had been teetering on the precipice of a laugh while this effort was being put forth, snickered right out in a loud guffaw at its conclusion.

"Well, that's a spell for you, I mus' say." And then he laughed again. The speller said nothing; but he grew very red in the face when his failure was announced, and cast a baleful glance at the old party, whose turn had now come, and who said, —

"You people should keep away from Oheo, you should. And now I'll tackle that little word;" and he smiled all over his face, while his eyes twinkled with merriment; and, looking sideways from one to the other, he rapidly spelled, —

"I-n, in, g-i-n, gin, — Ingin."

His smile deepened into a broad grin as he watched the chagrin flush to the countenances of the other spellers, who had been misled all the time on a wrong pronunciation of the word. He was grinning with all his might, when the teacher said, —

"You ain't got the right word."

"Wh—ah—ot?" and he bore down on the brazen-faced young man a look calculated to freeze him to the bone.

"Indian is the word. There is no such word as Ingin," said the teacher.

"Oh! there isn't, hey?" (sarcastically.) "You know, of course. You know all about it, you pimply" —

"But, my dear sir, I" —

"You needn't apologize to me!" shouted the old party, stamping the floor with his cane. "Who be you, anyway, putting on your airs about me? I could twist your scrawny neck off of you in two minutes, you white-livered puppy, you!"

"But, my dear sir, let me ex" —

"It isn't Ingin, is it?" ground out the old chap between his teeth. "It's somethin' else, I suppose. Oh, yes! you know, of course. And a nice one you are with your eddication! Why don't your mother send back them apples she borrowed a month ago?" and he looked around the store with a triumphant glare of sarcasm.

"But just hear me" —

"*Hear* you! Who are you, anyway? What's your father? When's he drawed a sober breath, I'd like to know? An' where's your smart brother Ben? In pris'n somewhere, I'll be bound. Oh! I know your hull family like a book; and a wuss lot than they are can't be found in this neighborhood; and you just put that in your pipe and smoke it, you egregious ass! Talk to *me* about spellin'!" And the old man, stamping his cane again, stalked passionately out of the store.

The lesson was then postponed.

A LAZY BOY'S LOAD.

YOUNG COVILLE is bringing in wood. Watch him. The wood lies by the saw-buck. There are two good armfuls of it ; but he is going to bring it all in at once. That is the better way, as it saves one trip. He is getting it upon his arm with great difficulty. The pile rises rapidly. It is all up but a few sticks ; and he has to steady himself with a great effort while feeling around for them. Each piece comes harder than its predecessor. The bottom sticks are apparently cutting into the flesh of his arm ; and one at the top is pressing most painfully against his cheek. He is sitting on his haunches in a disagreeable position, the increasing weight making his knee-joints ache. The dizzy pile is held in place only by the severest effort of both brain and muscle. The slightest false motion would topple it to the ground. He realizes it. All the color in his body is in his face, and the cords thereof are drawn to the utmost tension. His eyes glow like a flame. He can't find that last stick. Slowly the right hand circles around, feeling carefully for it. His eyes are bright ; but they are ranged over the load on his arm, and the very nearest approach they can make to the scene is the distant horizon. Still he skirmishes about with the right hand. A moisture is beginning to well up in the bright orbs, making the horizon indis-

tinged. The muscles nearest the mouth are commencing to slacken, and the under-lip slightly trembles. It is noticeable that the right hand is losing its caution, and growing a trifle impulsive. Its circles are sharper, and less in symmetry. He has gone over all the ground in reach. He bends apprehensively forward for more territory. There is a waver, then another, a sudden plunge for recovery, and over goes the pile; and a boy with passion-distorted face is blindly kicking the inoffensive sticks. Then the back-door opens; and he suddenly stops, and glares morosely at the wreck.

"William Henry!" exclaims a shrill voice, "are you going to be all night bringing in that wood?"

"Go in the house!" he mutters under his breath.

"What's that you say to me, young man?"

"I said I'm comin's quick's I could," he hastily but frankly explains. "Do you s'pose I can help it 'cause the wood tips over when I get it piled up?"

"What do you try to carry so much for, then?" she properly asks. "You bring along part of that wood, and go after the rest pretty quick, or I'll send your father out to you;" and the door slams again.

Does he take in part of it? Never. His heart may be wrung, and the tears flow like rain; but he will carry all that wood in at once, if it takes five years. It was a mere caprice then; but it is

principle now. He goes over the same performance again, and he repeats it until he masters every stick, and rises, reeling, to his feet. Then he stumbles painfully up the path, his breath coming quick and strong, his eyes bulging, and his knees almost screaming out with the ache they are enduring. He can't see the stoop, and hardly any thing of the house but the roof. He staggers up the steps, and kicks violently against the door. It is opened by his impatient and thoroughly disgusted mother; but the exertion has fatally disturbed the poise of the pile. One stick comes thundering to the floor, then another, and another. He makes a desperate effort to reach the wood-box with the rest of the load; but piece after piece comes crashing down, arousing the whole family, and nearly driving his mother insane. He reaches the box. He may not have one-half the load on his arm; but he brought it all in at once, thank Heaven!

THE DUTIFUL BOY.

THIS was on Pine Street, Saturday. The central figure was a bareheaded woman, with a broom in her hand. She stood on the back-stoop, and was crying, "Georgie!"

There was no response; but anybody who had been on the other side of a close board fence at

the foot of the garden might have observed two boys intently engaged in building a mud-pie.

"That's your mother hollering, Georgie," said one of the two, placing his eye to a knot-hole, and glancing through to the stoop.

"I don't care," said the other.

"Ain't you going in?"

"No."

"George!" came another call, short and sharp, "do you hear me?"

There was no answer.

"Where is she now?" inquired Georgie, putting in the filling of the pie.

"On the stoop," replied the young man at the knot-hole.

"What's she doin'?"

"Ain't doin' nothin'."

"George *Augustus*!"

Still no answer.

"You needn't think you can hide from me, young man, for I can see you; and, if you don't come in here at once, I'll come out there in a way that you will know it."

Now, this was an eminently natural statement, but hardly plausible, as her eyes would have had to pierce an inch-board fence to see Georgie; and, even were this possible, it would have required a glance in that special direction, and not over the top of a pear-tree in an almost opposite way.

Even the boy at the knot-hole could hardly repress a smile.

“What’s she doin’ now?” inquired Georgie.

“She stands there yet.”

“I won’t speak to you again, George Augustus,” came the voice. “Your father will be home in a few minutes, and I shall tell him all about what you have done.”

Still no answer.

“Ain’t you afraid?” asked the conscientious young man, drawing his eye from the knot-hole to rest it.

“Noah! She won’t tell pa; she never does: she only sez it to scare me.”

Thus enlightened and re-assured, the guard covered the knot-hole again.

“Ain’t you coming in here, young man?” again demanded the woman; “or do you want me to come out there to you with a stick? I won’t speak to you again, sir!”

“Is she comin’?” asked the baker.

“No.”

“Which way is she lookin’?”

“She’s lookin’ over in the other yard.”

“Do you hear me, I say?” came the call again.

No answer.

“George Augustus! do you hear your mother talking to you?”

Still no answer.

"Oh! you just wait, young man, till your father comes home, and he'll make you hear, I'll warrant ye."

"She is gone in now," announced the faithful sentinel, withdrawing from his post.

"All right! Take hold of this crust, and pull it down on that side, and that'll be another pie done," said the remorse-stricken George Augustus.

ENJOYING THEIR CHURCH PRIVILEGES.

It was after the evening service. Mrs. Coonton and the three Misses Coonton had arrived home. They sat listlessly around the room with their things on. Mr. Coonton was lying on the lounge, asleep. It had been, undoubtedly, an impressive sermon, as the ladies were silent, busy with their thoughts.

"Emmeline," said Mrs. Coonton, suddenly addressing her eldest, "did you see Mrs. Parker when she came in?"

"Yes, ma," replied Emmeline.

"She didn't have that hat on last Sunday, did she?"

"No," said Emmeline. "It is her new hat. I noticed it the moment she went down the aisle; and I says to Sarah, 'What on earth possesses Mrs. Parker to wear such a hat as that?' says I."

"Such a great prancing feather on such a little

hat looked awful ridiculous. I thought I should laugh right out when I saw it," observed Sarah.

"I don't think it looked any worse than Mary Schuyler's, with the flaring red bow at the back," said Amelia.

"I don't see what Mrs. Schuyler can be thinking of, to dress Mary out like that," said Mrs. Coonton with a sigh. "Mary must be older than Sarah; and yet she dresses as if she was a mere child."

"She's nearly a year older than I am," asserted Sarah.

"Did you see how the Widow Marshall was trucked out?" interrupted Emmeline. "She was as gay as a peacock. Mercy! what airs that woman puts on! I would like to have asked her when she's going to bring back that pan of flour;" and Emmeline tittered maliciously.

"She's shining around old McMasters, they say," mentioned Amelia.

"Old McMasters!" ejaculated Mrs. Coonton. "Why, he is old enough to be her father!"

"What difference do you suppose that makes to her?" suggested Emmeline. "She'd marry Methuselah. But I pity him if he gets her. She's a perfect wildcat."

"Say, Em, who was that gentleman with Ellen Byxby?" inquired Amelia.

"That's so," chimed in Sarah with spirit: "who was he?"

"What gentleman?" asked Mrs. Coonton.

"Why, I don't know who it was," explained Emmeline.

"They came in during the prayer. He was a tall fellow, with light hair and chin-whiskers."

"It couldn't have been her cousin John from Brooklyn," suggested Mrs. Coonton.

"Bother, no!" said Sarah pettishly. "He is short, and has brown hair. This gentleman is a stranger here. I wonder where she picked him up."

"She seemed to keep mighty close to him," said Amelia. "But she needn't be scared: no one will take him, unless they are pretty hard pushed. He looks as soft as squash. Did you see him tumbling up his hair with his fingers? I wonder what that big ring cost, — two cents?" and the speaker tittered.

"Well, I'm glad if she's got company," said Mrs. Coonton kindly. "She's made efforts enough to get some one, goodness knows!"

"I should say she had," coincided Emmeline. "She's got on one of them Victoria hats, I see. If I had a drunken father, I'd keep in doors, I think, and not be parading myself in public."

Just then there was a movement on the lounge, and the ladies began to take off their things.

"Hello, folks!" said Mr. Coonton, rising up, and rubbing his eyes. "Is church out?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Coonton with a yawn, which communicated itself to her daughters.

"Did you have a good sermon?"

"Pret-ty good," accompanied by another yawn all round.

"See many good clothes?" was the next query.

"I suppose you think, Mr. Coonton, that that is all your wife and daughters go to church for, — to look at people's clothes," said Mrs. Coonton tartly.

"That's just like pa," said Emmeline, with a toss of her head: "he is always slurring church people."

Pa sloped to bed.

THEY ALL DO IT.

A WIFE, when she has received suitable notice, can get up an excellent dinner for her husband's friend. She does her level best, working without stint, until a repast which pleases her in every particular is spread. Then the following conversation takes place with the guest: —

"I hope you'll be able to make out a meal."

"I shall do nicely, I know," he says.

"I'm really ashamed of the table," she rattles on.

"Why, you needn't be," he protests.

"But it's all his fault," she explains, nodding toward her husband. "He never gives me any warning scarcely; and it's such warm weather now,

that there is nothing you can keep on hand for an emergency."

"Why, you've done nobly, I think; couldn't have done better," asserts the guest, beginning to lose his interest in the topic.

"Oh! I hope you don't think *this* any thing of a dinner," she says, looking with anxious pride over the spread. "You must come up again; and let me know beforehand, and I'll promise you something decent to eat."

"I'm sure this can't be beaten," protests the guest, with a sense of becoming depressed.

"Oh, bless me! this is nothing but a pick-up dinner, — just the same as we'd have if alone. Do try another biscuit: I don't suppose they are fit to eat, though," she says, with increased anxiety, as she observes their delicate color and flaky texture.

"They are beautiful," he hastily explains, feeling very uncomfortable the while.

"You must take the will for the deed," she resumes. "I didn't see we were out of bread till the last moment, and then I hastily made up these. I didn't think they'd be half way decent, as there was no time to work them."

And so she rattles on with her disastrous comments, the dear old fraud! while he continues to protest, and continues to feel more and more like getting up and flying madly away.

A MODEL BOY.

THE man across the way recently rented the upper part of his house to a family from an outside district. The head of the family came to secure the rent. He was a tall, bony man, with a sun-burned face, and light, tawny chin-whiskers. He looked very much like a cross between a farmer and a planing-mill. He explained, —

“What I want is a peaceful naberhood ; and the comforts of a home I get myself. There’s the ole woman, my wife, and our boy. James is but seven years old. He ain’t strong, bein’ given more to study than to work ; but he’s got a head on him, I can tell you. But I want a peaceful naberhood, and you look like the man that kin just supply the demand. We’ll be around on time.”

They moved in two weeks ago. On the close of the third day, the boy James had succeeded in flooding the first floor by leaving a pipe running on the second, and had pulled off all the tomatoes to throw against the barn. The man across the way mildly intimated to his new tenant what James had done.

“He didn’t eat any of them green termatys, did he ?” inquired the anxious parent.

“I don’t suppose he did,” was the reply of the landlord, who was evidently trying to see the relevance of the query.

"And he didn't get his feet wet, I hope?" was the next question.

"I believe not," was the feeble reply.

"Well," said the grateful father, "let us be thankful that it is no worse. James must be more kee-ful. A single green termaty, or a pair of wet socks, might waft his little soul into eternity before you'd know. I'll reason with James at once. I thank you, sir, for your interest in James." And he went into the house; while the man across the way sat hastily down on the stoop, and smote his forehead.

Before he had entirely recovered from this affair, James again became conspicuous. This time, he stuck a lath through the sash of the front-door.

The man across the way met the parent at the gate that evening. He mentioned James's exploit.

"What, with his hand did he do it?" gasped the agitated father. "Oh, no, no! Not the little hand which I have held so often in mine. Not the little hand which has pulled these whiskers so many times in babyhood. Oh! say it was not with his hand he broke the glass."

The man across the way explained that it was done with a lath.

"Heaven be praised!" ejaculated the grateful father. "Poor James! He ain't strong; an' weak folks are always unfortunite, mostly. But I'm glad he didn't hurt himself. He ain't a strong boy; but I'm in hopes, with quiet and pleasant surroundings,

he'll improve. This is just the naberhood for James. It's peaceful, and I like peace : so does James an' the ole woman." And he passed in to his tea, leaving the man across the way with a stony stare in his eyes.

The next day James turned on the hose, and, before he was discovered, had prostrated twenty-five plants, broken down a hanging-basket, torn up the flower-bed, and nearly blinded the little girl from the next house, who was peering through the fence at the performance.

The man across the way came home to tea, and saw the ruin which had been effected, and he was nearly beside himself with rage. There was a look of determination on his face when he encountered, an hour later, the peaceable tenant coming up the yard.

"I tell you, sir," he began, "this last freak of your boy is altogether too much;" and he pointed to the devastation.

"Why, how did James do that?" inquired the father.

"He turned on the hose," explained the man across the way between his clinched teeth.

The face of the tenant blossomed into a genial smile.

"Why, what an observing little fellow he is!" said he. "I was saying this noon to the ole woman, that your plants ought to be watered, or they'd all

dry up ; an' he must have heard me, an' gone an' done it himself. That's just like James. He's so thoughtful for one so young !”

The man across the way grew black enough in the face to strangle.

“ I tell you, sir, I won't stand this again,” he declared in a voice quivering with passion. “ What that boy wants is a skinning from head to foot ; and, if he had the right kind of father, he'd get it before he was an hour older.”

It was painful to see the expression of grief and astonishment which settled like a cloud upon the face of the new tenant.

“ What !” he gasped, “ skin James, little James, the sunshine of our home, — a poor little weakling, whose only fault is trying to do too much ? And you, a man forty years old, an' weighing a hundred an' sixty pounds, I dare say, get mad with a little boy like James ? Look here, you !” he suddenly blurted, stretching his stature to the utmost : “ I come here for peace ; and I'll have peace, you bet ! If you're opposed to peace, why didn't you say so when I got the house of you ? Wasn't I frank an' open an' above-board with you ? Didn't I tell you on the start that I wanted a peaceful naberhood ? Why didn't you deal as honest-like with me, and own up that you was of a quarrelsome nature ? Why didn't you do that, I want to know ? I don't want to have any words with you, an' I

ain't a-going to have. I am a peaceful citizen. I've lived with twenty-five different families, an' I never had any trouble. I'm for peace every time ; an' I'll have peace where I live, or I'll git at once : you can just bet your money on that. If you can't keep your temper down, we'll git ; for I won't have James worried for all the houses between here and the perfumed plains of Araby. Gosh all hemlock ! what's life without peace ? ”

Yesterday we observed the second-floor furniture loading on a wagon ; by which we conclude the man across the way is not able to keep his temper down.

THE BUREAU-DRAWER.

THE man who will invent a bureau-drawer which will move out and in without a hitch will not only secure a fortune, but will attain to an eminence in history not second to the greatest warriors. There is nothing, perhaps (always excepting a stove-pipe), that will so exasperate a man as a bureau-drawer which will not shut. It is a deceptive article. It will start off all right ; then it pauses at one end while the other swings in as far as it can. It is the custom to throw the whole weight of the person against the end which sticks. If any one has succeeded in closing a drawer by so doing, he will confer a favor by sending his address to this office.

We have seen men do this several times, and then run from the other side of the room, and jump with both feet against the obstinate end. This doesn't appear to answer the purpose any better; but it is very satisfying. Mrs. Holcomb was trying to shut a bureau-drawer Saturday morning; but it was an abortive effort. Finally she burst into tears. Then Mr. Holcomb told her to stand aside, and see him do it.

"You see," observed Mr. Holcomb with quiet dignity, "that the drawer is all awry. That's what makes it stick. Now, anybody but a woman would see at once, that to move a drawer standing in that position would be impossible. I now bring out this other end even with the other,—so; then I take hold of both knobs, and, with an equal pressure from each hand, the drawer moves easily in. See?"

The dreadful thing moved readily forward for a distance of nearly two inches; then it stopped abruptly.

"Ah!" observed Mrs. Holcomb, beginning to look happy again.

Mr. Holcomb very properly made no response to this ungenerous expression; but he gently worked each end of the drawer to and fro, but without success. Then he pulled the drawer all the way out, adjusted it properly, and started it carefully back: it moved as if it was on oiled wheels. Mr.



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Holcomb smiled. Then it stopped. Mr. Holcomb looked solemn.

"Perhaps you ain't got the ends adjusted," suggested the unhappy Mrs. Holcomb.

Mr. Holcomb made no reply. Were it not for an increased flush in his face, it might have been doubted if he heard the remark at all. He pushed harder at the drawer than was apparent to her; but it didn't move. He tried to bring it back again; but it would not come.

"Are you sure you have got every thing out of here you want?" he finally asked, with a desperate effort to appear composed.

"Oh! *that's* what you are stopping for, is it? But you needn't: I have got what I wanted: you can shut it right up." Then she smiled a very wicked smile.

He grew redder in the face, and set his teeth firmly together, and put all his strength to the obdurate drawer, while a hard look gleamed in his eye.

But it did not move. He pushed harder.

"Ooh, ooh!" he groaned.

"I'm afraid you haven't got the ends adjusted," she maliciously suggested.

A scowl settled on his face, while he strained every muscle in the pressure.

"What dumb fool put this drawer together, I'd like to know?" he snapped out. She made no

reply; but she felt that she had not known such happiness since the day she stood before the altar with him, and orange-blossoms in her hair.

"I'd like to know what in thunder you've been doing to this drawer, Jane Holcomb?" he jerked out.

"I ain't done any thing to it," she replied.

"I know better," he asserted.

"Well, know what you please, for all I care," she sympathizingly retorted.

The cords swelled up on his neck, and the corners of his mouth grew white.

"I'll shut that drawer, or I'll know the reason of it!" he shouted; and he jumped up, and gave it a passionate kick.

"Oh my!" she exclaimed.

He dropped on his knees again, and grabbed hold of the knobs, and swayed and pushed at them with all his might. But it didn't move.

"Why in Heaven's name don't you open the window? Do you want to smother me?" he passionately cried.

It was warm, dreadfully warm. The perspiration stood in great drops on his face, or ran down into his neck. The birds sang merrily out the door, and the glad sunshine lay in golden sheets upon the earth; but he did not notice them. He would have given five dollars if he had not touched the accursed bureau; he would have given ten if

he had never been born. He threw all his weight on both knobs. It moved then. It went to its place with a suddenness that threw him from his balance, and brought his burning face against the bureau with force enough to skin his nose, and fill his eyes with water to a degree that was blinding.

Then he went out on the back-stoop and sat there for an hour, scowling at the scenery.

A WOMAN'S IDEA OF FINANCE.

A DANBURY man was looking at his yard Thursday afternoon. He was looking at it in such a way as to easily attract the attention of any neighbor who might have a lot of unemployed time on hand. Such a party pretty soon joined the observer, and immediately took an all-absorbing interest in the contemplated improvement. From this subject they rapidly drifted into finance.

"Pretty tough times," observed the neighbor.

"Yes, they are that ; an' it'll be tougher before we're over it, I imagine," was the answer.

They were both sitting on a saw-horse under an apple-tree, near the back-door, when this conversation commenced. The owner of the premises was chewing on a bit of straw ; and the neighbor was mechanically pulling tops from the plantain in reach.

"What do you think of this money-question which has got into politics this year?" inquired the neighbor.

"I think it'll be settled one way or the other before another presidential election is over," replied the owner. "You see the matter is being" —

"Ezekiel!" pronounced a sharp voice from the stoop.

"Well, what is it?" he curtly inquired.

"I wish you'd get me a pail of water."

"In a minute. — As I was sayin,' the matter is bein' pressed with unusual force. There has been this effort for years to come down to a specie basis ; but nothin' definite has been reached. Now, I imagine this campaign will settle it."

"You believe specie to be the best currency, of course?"

"Certainly. What does the increase of paper money amount" —

"Ezeziel!" came the voice from the stoop.

"In a minute. — All the paper you might print from now till" —

"Ezekiel!"

"Thunder and lightning! Maria, what is the matter?" he passionately ejaculated.

"I want you to get me a pail of water: I'm waitin' for it."

"I'll get it in a minute, if you'll just hold your breath. — You might, as I said, print money till

doomsday; an', if you ain't got the gold to back it up, what is it going to amount to? As far as exchange is concerned, among ourselves I will admit that paper" —

"Ezekiel!"

"Good gracious! Maria, what *do* you want?"

"I want a pail of water. I've told you a dozen times. If you don't hurry up with it, you'll have to go without dinner."

"Where is the pail?" snapped the annoyed husband, seeing it in her hand. "It's a pity if I can't get a chance to say a word, without being put out every minute."

Seeing him rise up, she set the pail down on the stoop, and retired; and he, helping himself to a fresh straw, said, —

"As I was sayin', paper is all well enough among ourselves as a matter of exchange; but what are we goin' to do for imports? We can't get along without gold then. An' what are we goin' to do when this money is called in, if we haven't got gold enough to redeem it? Now, suppose, for instance, that I had ten" —

"Ezekiel!" came the voice again. But he did not hear it.

—"thousand dollars in cash, an' supposin' I wanted to use forty thousand dollars. What do I do? I take" —

"Ezekiel! Why on earth don't you stop that gab of yours, and get me a pail of water?"

“Yes, yes, in a minute. — An’ I take my paper on the market for that amount. Here is ten thousand dollars in cash, you see, an’ here is the— Woosh! gar! ooh!” and just here the gasping husband was awed into silence by seeing his neighbor dash over the fence in a dripping condition. The forty thousand dollars on paper was not there, as might have reasonably been expected; but a pail of indifferent water was there, hurled with all the force and fury an exasperated woman is capable of. And, as the choking expounder of specie as a basis reached out spasmodically for his breath, the interested neighbor, with fully two-thirds of the contents of the bucket in his hair and under his coat-collar, sped across the lots with a vehemence that was really marvellous as an exhibition of speed, and with a silence in regard to the cause which was born of twenty years of married life.

SPRING IN DANBURY.



SPRING IN DANBURY.

MR. COBLEIGH'S SORROW.

MR. COBLEIGH moved on the 1st of May. We were going through North Street when we met him with the insignia of the act upon him ; viz., a looking-glass, clock, and lamp. If we had suddenly discovered our own family moving, we could not have been more astonished. He had lived in the house whence he was moving for at least eight years. He set the lamp on a fence, and propped the clock and looking-glass against the same.

"You are surprised to see me at this?" he said with an anxious look.

We admitted as much.

"I little expected it at one time myself." And he sighed drearily.

"Any trouble with the landlord?"

"No, no."

"With the house, then?"

"Oh, no! good landlord, and good house. I don't know if I'll ever again find as good. I've

lived there eight years last fall ; and I might've lived there all my life, if it wasn't for the danged fools in the world."

We looked our sympathy.

"You see," he went on, "about six months ago, one of those chaps who believe in a series of sudden and unexpected judgment-days — Second Advent, they call 'em — moved in next door (where Parker used to live). He was a peaceful sort of a man enough to get along with ; but he was a strong Second Advent, and so is his wife. Well, they hadn't lived there two weeks before they got acquainted, and began to have revelations." He paused and sighed.

"But why should their peculiar religious belief make you dissatisfied with your home?" we ventured to inquire.

"Why?" he ejaculated, staring hard at us. "But then you don't know any thing about it. You never lived next door to a Second Advent, perhaps?"

"Not that we can remember."

"You'd remembered it if you had," he replied with significant emphasis. "I'll never forget my experience. That family got acquainted with us ; and then it had its revelations. First they borrowed a little sugar, and then a little tea, and then a little saleratus, and then this, and then that. They said the world was all going to be burned up in

two weeks, and they didn't feel like going to the expense of getting a barrel of sugar, when eternity was so close ; and wouldn't we let them have a small teacupful ? We let 'em have it. Then, two days after, they came in, and said, that, owing to the immediate approach of the end of all things, they didn't think it advisable to lay in a ton of saleratus, and wouldn't we just loan them a cupful ? My wife didn't believe, of course, that the world was a-coming to an end ; but she thought the poor critters did : and she reasoned, that, when they saw there was no fire nor smoke on the day in question, they'd pony up with the sugar and saleratus, and the hundred and one other things. But they wasn't that kind of Advents. When the time came around, and the performance didn't, they professed to have got a sort of postscript with later particulars ; and then they came over as rampant as ever, and more so. In fact, every fresh disappointment appeared to give them new zeal for victuals and other things ; and it got so that they were over every day, and sometimes twice a day, after one thing or another."

"But didn't they return any of the articles?"

"Certainly not. If the world was going to end, what on earth was we a-going to do with the articles ? I couldn't go through fire, could I, with teacupfuls of saleratus, sugar, tea, &c., hung to me ? That's the way they reasoned. But they was going to make it all right on the other shore, was what

his wife always said. I told my wife, that, if we could only get back ten per cent of the things on this shore, I'd cheerfully run my chances for the balance when we got over there. Besides all that, the prospect of so much groceries waiting me on the other shore began, after a while, to get very embarrassing ; and I kinder hinted to the chap something to this effect ; but it did no good. He'd got that notion bored right into his skull ; and all he could see was clouds of glory, and angels, and harps, and my sugar and saleratus and coffee and the like. By George ! it got to be just awful, I can tell you ! Day in and day out, that fellow, or some of his folks, was repairing their ascension duds, or going for my groceries ; and it did seem as if I'd go mad, and get up a judgment-day on my own hook. Why, that chap would come on the greatest errands you ever saw. He come in one day to get my shaving-brush. He said he didn't feel justified in buying a new brush right on the eve of a general resurrection ; but he would use mine, and, when we all got over *there*" (here Mr. Cobleigh waved his hand in gloomy indication of the locality), "he'd give me a shaving-brush inlaid with precious stones, and frisking in golden foam. Bah !—the jackass ! But that's the way he'd talk. He got my axe one day with a lot of the same foolishness ; and, while he was using it, the handle broke, and the blade went down the well. He come over right away to see if

I had another axe ; and when I told him I hadn't, and that I didn't know how I was to get along without that one, I'm blamed if he didn't want me to borrow one from some of the neighbors, so he could finish the little job he was at ! He said there was no use of my buying a new axe, with the crack of doom staring us in the face. There'd be no use for a new axe in heaven, for there'd be no pain there, an' no crying ; with a lot of other stuff. This riled me like thunder. But there was no use talking to *him*. I was mad, though, about the axe, — as mad as I could be ; and I told him, if he didn't get me a new axe, I'd bust him in pieces with the right arm of the law. And what do you suppose he said ? ” And Mr. Cobleigh looked at us with grim anxiety.

We were obliged to admit that we couldn't tell.

“ He said he'd go home and pray for me,” added our friend with a sigh of despair. “ And now, what *could* I do with such a chap as that ? There was no use in getting mad, and you couldn't reason him out of the foolishness. And he wouldn't move ; and the day of judgment showed no signs of being in earnest. So there I was. The only thing I could do was to get away ; and I've hired a house at the other end of the town, and I'm moving there. And now,” added our unfortunate friend, steadying the looking-glass and clock under his

arms, while he grasped the lamp, "I've got where there is a jail on one side of me, and a graveyard on the other ; and I don't care a darn how many Second Advents move in on either side."

And he stalked grimly on his way.

THE BENEVOLENT STRANGER.

SHE had a hen that was bound to set, and which she was bound should not set. Where there is such a diversion of sentiment between a family and its hens, there can be no peace nor harmony. The feelings of both are arrayed against the other ; and conflict and jars, and unhappiness generally, are the sure results. There may come a time when both parties will clearly comprehend each other, and when the hen's feelings will not only be understood, but respected. We should like very much to live until the glad dawn of that era ; but our friends mustn't be too confident that we will. A family on Nelson Street, just above Division, have a hen that wishes to set. She was surprised on the nest Friday afternoon for the severalth time. The woman of the house thus found her, and, snatching her up, took a string, tied it about the fowl's leg, and hitched her up to the fence. She had just completed this act, when she was accosted by an elderly gentleman, a stranger, who,

in passing, stopped to observe the performance. He was a man of a grave but benevolent expression of face, and one whose dress indicated that he was in good circumstances, and thus must command respect.

"What is the trouble with the hen, madam?" he asked.

"I'm trying to break her up from setting," replied the woman.

"And don't you succeed?"

"I haven't so far, although I've tried every thing about. We've poured water on her, and kept her under a barrel, and beat her, and tied a red rag around her leg, and tied her up in the hot sun all day, and done about every thing. But I think I'll conquer her now. I've got her tied up by the leg, so she can't touch the ground; and I guess she'll get sick of setting when she's let down again."

The stranger looked at the hen, which was evidently suffering from the position it was in, and with a sigh asked, —

"Won't you take her down now? She suffers."

"I can't help it," said the woman with tightening teeth. She must learn better."

"Have you any children?" he inquired.

"Yes; five."

"Why did you have them?"

"Why — did — I — have — them?" she repeated, staring at him. "Why, because I wanted them."

"Exactly. It was in obedience to a maternal instinct. Now, suppose, when you felt this want for children, you had been shoved under a barrel: would that have been right?"

"No," said she softly.

"Or had cold water poured on your head?"

She said nothing.

"Suppose, again, you had a red flannel tied around you: how would that have done?"

Still she was silent.

"We'll make another supposition," he continued. "Suppose that when this hungry for a little one to come to you, one that you might take and lead and teach, just as your neighbors about you lead and teach their precious ones, you had been beaten, tied up by the feet, and left in the hot sun all day: would that have been right?"

She dropped her head, and said nothing.

"Or would you prefer being tied up by one foot to a fence?"

"No, no!"

"Will you take the hen down?"

In something less than four seconds that hen was down from her uncomfortable position, and moving about with a most grateful step.

"I'll never tie up another hen as long as I live!" cried the excited woman.

"Good for you!" said the old gentleman.

"Hens must not always set when they want to ; but shutting them up in a coop where they can have plenty of room, but no nests to set in, will break them up just as effectually as violent measures ; and, better yet, you retain their confidence and affection."

The repentant woman invited him to take a glass of milk ; and he went in and took it.

MR. COVILLE'S EXPERIMENT.

MR. COVILLE has got but one apple-tree ; but it is a good tree. It has hung full of blossoms, and in the past week has been a very beautiful ornament in his little yard. We do think apple-blossoms the sweetest flowers ever created. On Mr. Coville's tree worms have made a huge and unsightly nest. It was not only an objectionable shadow upon the glory of the foliage, but it threatened to cover the tree with an enemy which would destroy the fruit, and make its place loathsome with their bodies. Mr. Coville learned that the only sure way of getting rid of the nest was to burn it away. This was to be done by a lighted bunch of rags saturated with camphene, and tied to the end of a pole so as to be applied to the nest. It was on Friday evening that Mr. Coville did this business. His wife helped him. He put a barrel

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under the tree to stand on, as he did not have a pole long enough to reach the nest from the ground. He tied a lot of rags on the end of a stick, and dipped the mass into a basin of camphene, and then touched off a match, and applied the ball of flame to the nest. High as he was from the ground, still he had to stand well up on his toes to make the remedy effective. But Mr. Coville did not mind that at all, because the flame was doing the work most beautifully.

"That'll sizzle 'em, by gracious!" he shouted down to his wife, who stood by him, while his eyes were riveted on the devastation above his head.

"Wah, ooh, *ooh*!" suddenly rent the air above the apple-tree; and, before the startled woman could comprehend from whence came the dreadful cry, she received a blow on the head from a ball of burning rags, and went down like a flash, striking the ground in time to see her husband descend, seat first, on a similar ball of flame, and rise again as if called up by an unseen but irresistible power.

It was all explained in a minute, while Mr. Coville sat in a large dish of cold water. It appears that a drop of the lighted camphene fell from the ball, and struck Mr. Coville on the chin just as he was in the very climax of enthusiasm, when every nerve seemed stretched to its utmost tension in fond anticipation of the most gratifying results. The shock was too great for his nervous

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system to withstand. The barrel went over in that awfully unexpected way which a barrel has of going over ; and, in the descent of his person, Mr. Coville fetched his wife a wipe over the head with his fireworks, as forcible as it was unintended ; and wound up the performance by sitting abruptly and inexplicably down upon the illumination itself. Mrs. Coville lost some hair, and was scorched on one ear, and Mr. Coville has had to have an entirely new sag put in his pants ; but the barrel was not injured in the least, and the torch is about as good as new, if any one cares to use it.

HIS WIFE'S MOTHER.

THEY had been having pancakes since the 1st of February. He was an economical man, and thought fifty-cent molasses was good enough. She was a trifle more refined in her taste, and yearned for sirups ; but, being a patient and meek woman, she gave up the struggle for the desire of her heart, and quietly submitted to his decision. Last Friday her mother made them her first visit. She is a woman large of bone, quick of thought, and amply adapted to tussle with the problems of life. She didn't take to the cheap adornment of the pancakes, and asked her daughter why she didn't have sirup.

"These cakes are too good to be smeared with such stuff," she asserted in a tone of disgust.

The wife made a feeble reply, while the husband smiled grimly to himself.

"Can't you get sirup in Danbury?" she asked him.

"I s'pose so."

"Then I shall expect some for my breakfast to-morrow morning," she said, looking straight at him.

Next morning the pitcher of molasses was on the table. She picked it up, and smelled of the contents.

"Faugh!" she exclaimed, lifting her nose: "where's that sirup?"

"I didn't get it," said he, without looking up.

"Did you forget it?" she asked, opening her lips as little as possible to say the words.

"No."

"Why didn't you get it, then?"

"Because it costs more than I want to pay."

"Oh!"

There was a moment's pause after this ejaculation, during which he raised his eyes to leer at her, but dropped them again, and moved uneasily in his chair.

"You never seem to think of the cost when you want a cigar or a drink of liquor, or to go off alone to a place of amusement," she said, looking straight

at his depressed face ; “ but, when any thing better than tar is wanted at home for pancakes, the cost is a matter of some importance. If you had a stomach that was half human, you couldn't eat it.”

“ It's good enough for me ; an' what's good enough for me must be good enough for others,” he doggedly growled.

There was a jump, the sound of an overturning chair and crockery ; and she was standing up, with one hand convulsively grasped in his hair, and the other clutching the pitcher of offence. His face was pressed against the table.

“ Lemme up !” he yelled.

“ It's good enough for you, is it ?” she cried. “ Well, you shall have the whole of it.”

And she turned the contents over his head, and worked it in his hair, and down his neck, and in his ears, while he spluttered and screamed and whined, and struggled with all his might to release himself ; but he was like a baby in the hands of a giant.

When she got through, she coolly proceeded to the sink, and deliberately washed her hands, while he sat there, quivering all over, and staring at her with an expression in his eyes that tallied admirably with the erect condition of his hair.

He was two full hours getting that stuff out of his hair ; but it was not wasted time. A gallon of the best sirup was sent up to the house within an hour after he went down ; and when she returned

home, four days later, he hired a carriage expressly to take her to the cars. When she came, she had to walk from the dépôt.

THE UNOSTENTATIOUS CUCUMBER.

THE first basket of cucumbers appeared in our market last week. Cucumbers are man's earliest friends. In appearance they are the most unpretentious among vegetables; but in character they take the precedence. When a cucumber first comes around, there is a general feeling of uneasiness, arising from a doubt, whose subtle influence is felt throughout the community. But this uneasiness wears off after a while, and suspicion gives way to genuine regard. In fact, there is not a vegetable which comes to the market that will command the respect a cucumber receives. When we see a cucumber, we are led to look back over its career. It has been a stormy one, even under the most favorable circumstances possible to cucumber development. Only about one in ten starting even in life ever reaches a position in society. There is some recompense, of course, in the excitement which arises from the dangers; and we can well believe that it must be eminently gratifying to a successful cucumber, when it has gained the victory, to find, that, instead of sinking into helpless old age,

it has been taken into the bosom of an enthusiastic family, and in a very few hours will be exploring them. Nothing excites a cucumber. This has been its record since time began ; and its self-possession, even in the presence of the most famous physicians and most successful coroners, has given rise to a popular proverb. What a cucumber has got to do, it does with all its might. It enters upon the work with intense enthusiasm ; but it patiently waits the time of action. The great depth of its nature is hidden from the world until about three A.M.

SHE OBJECTED TO MUD.

THIS is a very trying season to smitten young men. The mud is very deep and very sticky ; and a young man is apt to be careless and indifferent about his stepping when escorting a particularly attractive young lady home. A rather embarrassing predicament a Danbury young man was placed in Sunday night. A young lady whose acquaintance he made a short time ago, and who struck him as being a trifle above any other being on earth, was leaving church without an escort Sunday night. He hastened to her side with his services. She accepted, and with a heartiness that made the universe act as if it was about to slip from under him. She took his arm ; and he moved along with her as

carefully as if she was a steamboat covered with diamonds. He never thought of the mud or the puddles, but ploughed through the one, and splashed through the other, as if both had been the choicest flowers. His thoughts being in heaven, it was natural that he should suppose his feet were not far below. When they got to the house, and he saw that there were indications of a good-sized parlor, he was fairly enchanted. They reached the stoop: she opened the door, and stepped into the hall to permit him to pass in, which he was hastening to do, when the burly form of the young lady's mother suddenly confronted him.

"Who's this?" she abruptly asked.

"O ma!" exclaimed the young girl, blushing, "this is Mr. Parker, who has come home with me."

"An' have you invited him in here such a night as this, with the mud a foot deep? Do you s'pose I've nothing to do but traipse after a lot of young loons, cleaning up their mud? My gracious! just look at them feet of his!—chock-full of mud! Do you s'pose I'm going to have that stuff tracked all over my carpets? Not by a good sight! Let him take his mud where he got it. I won't have it here; an' I've got no patience with people who don't know any better than to lug a swamp along with em."

And she swept indignantly back to the sitting-room, leaving the daughter dumb with confusion,

and the unhappy Mr. Parker staring vacantly at her. Recovering his senses sufficiently to bid her a husky good-night, he cast an agonized glance at "them feet of his," and immediately lifted them in a homeward direction.

RUNNING THE GANTLET.

A NEW family was to move into the neighborhood, and the neighbors were on 'nettles of curiosity in regard to them. The furniture came on Tuesday; and Mrs. Winters, who lives next door, received a call from Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Reynolds just as the first load of goods made its appearance on the street.

"Do you know the new neighbors are coming to-day?" inquired Mrs. Jackson.

"I've heard so. I wonder what kind of people they are," said Mrs. Winters.

"I don't know," replied Mrs. Jackson; "but I think their furniture is coming now."

"Is that so?" And Mrs. Winters hastened into the next room, whose window commanded a most desirable view of the situation.

The excellent ladies followed immediately after her; and the three forms filled up the window, and the three pairs of eyes peered through the blinds in the liveliest expectation. The load drove up to

the gate ; and, after what appeared to be a needlessly long time, the ropes were removed, and the unloading commenced.

"That must be the man," said Mrs. Reynolds, indicating a gentleman who just staggered up with a clock under one arm, a looking-glass under the other, a basket of something or another in each hand, and his pockets full of vases.

"Of course," promptly chimed in her companions, recognizing at once that the pack-horse was "the man."

"He's nice-looking," said one of the ladies ; in which the others coincided.

"What is that at the front of the wagon?" asked Mrs. Jackson.

"I was looking at that myself," said Mrs. Winters. "It's a settee, ain't it?"

"I guess it is," replied Mrs. Jackson anxiously. "I didn't know at first but that it might be a tête-à-tête."

"Oh, no ! that's nothing but a settee, — a well-worn one too," said Mrs. Reynolds.

"Why, don't you suppose they've got a tête-à-tête?" inquired Mrs. Jackson with painful anxiety.

"It tain't on that load, at any rate," said Mrs. Reynolds, whose carefully trained eyes had already encompassed and pierced the wagonful of furniture.

"What do you think of those chairs?" asked

Mrs. Winters. "I can't see them very well, as my eyes trouble me so."

Mrs. Jackson kindly came to her rescue at once.

"They're oak, I guess, an' a very cheap-looking article at that. I do wonder if this is their best furniture."

Further remark on the topic was cut short by the appearance of a tired-looking woman leading two children. She stopped at the load, and said something to the pack-horse.

"That's her!" breathlessly exclaimed Mrs. Jackson.

"Well, there's nothing stunning about her," suggested Mrs. Winters.

"Gracious! I should say not," added Mrs. Reynolds. "She's mortal homely; and she's got no more style than a telegraph-pole."

"Look at that hat! It's a fall hat, as sure as I live!" And the speaker almost lost her breath at the discovery.

"What sort of goods has she on? Is it calico, or a delaine?"

"I can't see from here; but I guess it's some cheap woollen goods. But see how it fits!"

"And she's got hoops on, as true as I'm alive!" explosively announced Mrs. Winters.

"That's so," chimed in the others with a tone of disgust that could not be concealed.

"Well, I know what the rest of the furniture is

without seeing it, now that I've seen her," intelligently observed Mrs. Jackson. "They ain't got a tête-à-tête to their name, and those chairs are their best parlor chairs too: you can take my word for that. I sha'n't call there in a hurry."

"Hardly," observed her companions with significant smiles.

And the three returned to the other room to talk of the revival.

Reader, if you have to move, move in the dead of the night. It's the best time; and you don't need much of a torchlight procession, either.

WHETHER this is the best time to burn garden rubbish is a question susceptible of considerable discussion; but it is the popular season. Great care should be taken in the composition of the burning heaps. If there are no old rubbers handy, a length of oilcloth makes a very good substitute. There is, of course, nothing that emits the peculiar flavor of burning rubber, unless it is hair; but hair is too costly to be considered for a moment. A piece of old oilcloth, about three feet or so in length, subjected to a slow flame, can be smelled by the most ordinary nose the distance of four gardens; and to many it is just as satisfying as burning rubber. It is best that the man should gather the rubbish.

This is so evident as to be not worthy of any discussion. A woman with a long-handled rake is more dangerous than a wet cellar. What rubbish she gets together scarcely compensates for the damage to the rake or to herself, or to any one who happens to be in the same yard at the time, and is too gallant or too helpless to take the nearest fence at a flying leap. The crowning performance is when she has got her skirts inextricably tangled up with the implement. She then goes into the house, leaving the rake at the foot of the back-stoop, with the teeth upward.

AN EARLY DELICACY.

A SALLOW-FACED man, dressed in faded and insufficient garments, with a knotted, sandy beard, skipped lightly into a Danbury dry-goods store yesterday afternoon. He had hugged up close to him in one arm a glass jar with a bit of dingy muslin over it. He wanted to see the proprietor; and a clerk obligingly pointed out that gentleman to him, who was then engaged in the herculean task of selling a lady a half-yard of linen. The stranger stalked up to him.

“Be you the boss, mister?” he asked with a seductive smile.

“Yes, sir. Any thing I can do for you?”

"Yes," said the stranger, carefully depositing the jar on the counter, and with an air as if the counter had been erected with this object specially in view. "I've got a prime article of horse-radish here that I want to sell you."

"I don't want to buy any," said the merchant with a tinge of pettishness in his tone.

"It's a prime article, I can tell ye."

"I don't want it."

"But you ain't looked at it, you ain't tried it," argued the vender.

"I tell you I don't want it."

"You can have it for fifty cents, although it's worth seventy-five. I'll dump it right out in a paper; or I'll leave the jar, and you kin bring it back to-morrow."

"I don't want it, I say; take it away," demanded the merchant, flushing slightly in the face.

"Don't you git in a hurry, boss," persuasively urged the proprietor of the condiment. "You don't git such horse-radish as this every day, I kin inform ye. I growed the roots that came from myself, by jickey! I growed 'em back of a barn; an' I took as much care of their cultivation as if they had been my own flesh and blood. Why, I've got up in the dead of night, with a lantern, an' went out back of that barn an' tucked them up, as it were. An' I said to my ole woman, sez I, 'Ole woman, them roots will go to make glao

the heart of a merchant-prince,' sez I; an' here they be, grated up an' ready for the table. What do you say?"

"I say, as I said before, that I don't want your stuff, and I want you to take it away from here at once," said the merchant, who had now become very red in the face.

"Stuff!" ejaculated the man with a start, while his eyes watered, and his under-lip trembled. "*Stuff!* You call *that* stuff, — that which grew right behind my own barn, an' which has had a lantern above it in the dead of night, — grated up by my own hands, an' with a pint of the best cider-vinegar in the country dancing through its veins? — you call it stuff, do you? an' you stand right here, an' in the broad light of day declare that none of that horse-radish will fresco your cold meat, an' set up before your children like a thing of beauty? All right." [He gathered the jar up in his arm again.] "You can't have this horse-radish now. You needn't whimper for it. Not a word from you," he added, with as much earnestness as if the merchant had dropped on his knees, and was agonizingly begging for a hopeless favor. "You ain't got money enough in your hull store to buy a grain of it. You shouldn't git as much as a smell of it if you was to git right down on your snoot, an' howl till you were cracked open. Gosh dum me!" he suddenly shouted, "I'll go out on the

boundless prairie, an' eat every bit of it myself, if it burns a hole clean through me as big as a tunnel, an' sets the prairie afire, an' devastates the land."

And with this terrific threat he strode gloomily away in search of a prairie.

THERE is one thing on which a husband and wife never can and never will agree; and that is on what constitutes a well-beaten carpet. When the article is clean, it's a man's impression that it should be removed, and he be allowed to wash up, and quietly retire. But a woman's appetite for carpet-beating is never appeased while a man has a whole muscle in his body; and, if he waited until she voluntarily gave the signal to stop, he might beat away until he dropped down dead. It is directly owing to his superior strength of mind that the civilized world is not a widow this day.

MAKING THE GARDEN.

WE suppose there is a time that comes to every man when he feels he should like to have a garden. If he takes such a notion, he will tell his wife of it. This is the first mistake he makes; and the ground thus lost is never fully recovered. She

draws her chair up to his, and lays one hand on his knee, and purses up her lips into a whistle of expectation, — the vixen! — and tells about her mother's garden, and how nice it is to have vegetables fresh from the vines every morning; and she will go right out and plan the whole thing herself. And so she does. He takes his spade, and works himself into a perspiration; and she tramps around under a frightful sun-bonnet, and gets under his feet, and shrieks at the worms, and loses her shoe, and makes him, first vexed, and then mad, and then ferocious. After the garden is spaded, he gets the seed, and finds she has been thoughtful enough to open the papers, and empty thirteen varieties of different vegetables into one dish. This leads him to step out doors, where he communes with Nature alone for a moment. Then he takes up the seed, and a hoe, and a line, and two pegs, and starts for the garden. And then she puts on that awful bonnet, and brings up the rear with a long-handled rake, and a pocketful of beans, and petunia-seed, and dahlia-bulbs. While he is planting the corn, she stands on the cucumber-hills and rakes over the seed-pan. Then she puts the rake-handle over her shoulder, and the rake-teeth into his hair, and walks over the other beds. He don't find the squash-seed until she moves; and then he digs them out of the earth with his thumb. She plants the beet-seed herself, putting about two

feet of earth and sod upon them. Then she takes advantage of his absorption in other matters, and puts down the petunia-seed in one spot ; and afterwards digs them up, and puts them down in another place. The beans she conceals in the earth wherever she can find a place, and puts the bulbs in the cucumber-hills. Then she tips over the seed-pan again, and apologizes ; and steps on two of the best tomato-plants, and says, " Oh my ! " which in no way resembles what he says. About this time she discovers a better place for the petunia-seed ; but, having forgotten where she last put them, she proceeds to find them, and, within an incredibly brief space of time, succeeds in unearthing pretty much every thing that has been put down. After confusing things so there is no earthly possibility of ever unravelling them again, she says the sun is killing her, and goes over to the fence, where she stands four hours, telling the woman next door about an aunt of hers who was confined to her bed for eleven years, and had eight doctors from the city ; but nothing would give her any relief until an old lady — But you have heard it before. The next day a man comes to his office to get the pay for a patent seed-sower which his wife has ordered ; and he no more than gets away, before the patentee of a new lawn-mower comes in with an order for ten dollars ; and he, in turn, is followed by the corn-sheller man ; and the miserable gardener

starts for home to head off the robbers, and finds his wife at the gate with his own hat on, and just about to close a bargain with a smooth-faced individual for a two-hundred-dollar mowing-machine, and a pearl-handled, ivory-mounted hay-cutter. He first knocks the agricultural implement agent on the head, and then drags the miserable woman into the house, and, locking the door, gives himself up to his emotions.

GETTING YOUR VEGETABLES FRESH.

THE chief charm of having a garden of your own is the fresh state of the vegetables which daily garnish your table. Any one who has always depended upon a store for his supply does not have the faintest conception of the superior flavor, tone, and elasticity of vegetables gathered fresh every morning from your own garden. Aside from this benefit, gardening is the most health-giving occupation known to man; unless we except that of a physician, which we don't. There is a man who lives on the other side of our street, who has a garden, and has fresh vegetables every day, our folks say. We don't know any thing about that; but we do know he has a garden, because we see him out in it every morning, in shirt-sleeves and slippers, picking cucumber and squash bugs. We know when he gets hold of one, by the way

he shuts up his mouth and fingers. Sometimes he doesn't catch the one he is after, and sometimes he makes a half-dozen passes at one bug. Every time he makes one of those passes he says something. The first remark is not very plainly heard, but the next is quite so; and the observation that follows after the sixth unfortunate pass appears to go completely through our head. He jumps around this way for about an hour, and, having got his blood up to fever-heat, goes in and drinks a cup of boiling coffee, and then goes to business. At noon he goes out there to kill a couple more bugs, but doesn't do it. He finds two hens from the next house in the cucumber-patch. They have scratched down to the cool earth, and thrown the parched soil of two cucumber-hills over their backs, and, with one eye closed in a speculative way, are thinking of the intense heat and the short grass-crop. When they see him, and the preparations of welcome he has hastily got together, they get up and leave. The first thing he throws at them knocks a limb from a choice pear-tree; and the next thing, which is generally a pail, goes through a glass cover to some choice flower-seeds, and loses its bail. He then goes into the house and gets some more boiling coffee, and says the man next door is — (something we never put in print) — and goes to business again. At night he comes home and kills bugs until supper-time, and then

goes in with his fingers smelling as if he had shaken hands with twelve hundred bed-bugs. He keeps his boy home from school to watch the garden, and guard it against the encroachment of straying cattle. The boy gets several other boys to come over and help him. They take a half-dozen sheets out of the wash, and put up a circus in the back part of the yard ; and some vicious boy who hasn't pins enough to get in leaves the front-gate open ; and, when the circus is in the midst of its glory, the cry of " A cow in the garden ! " breaks up the performance, and sends both artists and audience in pursuit of the beast. When our neighbor comes home that night to gather vegetables fresh from the garden, and smash bugs with his finger and thumb, and goes out and looks at the destruction, it is altogether likely the first thing he thinks of is the danger in eating store-vegetables which have been picked some days before, and allowed to swelter and wither in noxious barrels, and how much better it is to have every thing fresh from the garden. But we are not certain ; neither is the proprietor of the circus.

GENTLE SPRING IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

WE frankly confess that we do not understand why the shaving-cup is packed at the bottom of a

barrel of tinware, or why a vest is used to wrap up a ham.

THE only way of putting down a stair-carpet without getting mad is to take the stairs out in the yard.

MANY articles which have become pleasant to us from long association look dreadfully cheap and dingy when loaded on a cart, with the neighboring window in direct range.

IT is carrying two lengths of stove-pipe, with two elbows at opposite angles, through a narrow hall, and up a carpeted stair, without dropping soot or knocking off the plaster, that is filling our lunatic-asylums.

NOTHING will start a man's temper so quick as to find the rubbish which he has thrown out of the back of the house as worthless appearing around at the front, under the charge of his patient and hopeful wife.

WHICH is heavier, — a pound of lead, or a pound of feathers? — *Old Conundrum.*

A single pound of feathers is just as heavy as a pound of lead ; but twenty-five pounds of feathers in a tick, in a narrow and crooked hall-way, is about

as heavy as two hundred and eighteen pounds of lead.

YEARS of experience in moving enables a carman to distinguish, in an apparently indifferent glance, the light from the heavy end of a stove, or which is the best position on the stairs,—in front, or behind. Against these fearful odds the head of the family stands no chance whatever.

THEN there is the carman who is to move you. He is engaged the day before. He says it is going to be so busy, that there will be some difficulty in accommodating you; but, if you can have your things ready at seven A.M., he thinks he can fix it. You are up at five o'clock that morning. At half-past six a full load of furniture is out in front, and another load is stacked up in the hall and on the stairs. Your coat is torn down the back, one thumb is out of joint, and a pint of soot and an equal quantity of perspiration are fighting for the mastery of your person. At eleven A.M. the carman makes his appearance, and says we are going to have rain.

It is singular the influence a stove-pipe has upon a married man. There is nothing in this world he respects so much. A passing load of furniture may, in its general appearance, be so

grotesque as to call forth the merriment of the thoughtless young ; but, if there is a piece of stove-pipe in it no larger than a hat, he will not laugh. We don't care who the man is, how he has been brought up, what is his position, wealth, or influence : there is that about a length of stove-pipe which takes hold upon his very soul with a force that he is helpless to resist ; and the married man who can stand within reaching-distance of a stove-pipe, without feeling his heart throb, his hands clinch, his hair raise, and his throat grow dry and husky, is an anomaly which does not exist. Stove-pipe has only one ingredient, and that is contrarieness. It is the most perverse article in existence. It has done more to create heart-aches, imbitter lives, break up homes, and scrape off skin, than all other domestic articles together. The domestic screw-driver pales its ineffectual fires in the presence of a stove-pipe ; and the family hammer just paws in the dust, and weeps. We don't care how much pains are taken to remember and keep in order the links : they will not come together as they came apart. This is not a joke ; this is not an exaggeration : it is simply the solemn, heaven-born truth. If we appear unduly excited in this matter, we are sorry for it ; but we cannot help it. We cannot write upon the subject at all without feeling the blood tingle at our very fingers' ends.



GENTLE SPRING IN THE HOUSEHOLD. — Page 157.



ONE of the most disastrous elements in a moving is a small boy with an aspiring disposition. If he carries any thing, it must be a chair, which he takes on his head, with the back at the front, so as to prevent him from seeing where he is going, and with the erect legs in range of the chandelier and upper door-casings. Thus equipped, he strikes a military step, improvising his mouth into a trumpet, and starts out. In less than a quarter of an hour he has that chair safely on the cart, where it is not wanted, and is hurrying back after another. Before the carman has returned for the second load, the one boy has developed into eight; each boy with a chair, each boy under feet, and each boy making as much noise as a planing-mill on a damp day. If a boy cannot get a chair to carry, he wants two bed-posts. He wants two, so he can carry one under each arm. Then he starts down stairs. First the posts cross each other at the front, and nearly throw him down; then they cross at the back, and the front ends fly off at a tangent, one of them digging into the kalsomined wall, and the other entangling in the banisters. But he won't let one of them go, but hangs on to both with exasperating obstinacy. In the mean time, the carman, who is working by the load, and not by the day, is waiting at the foot of the stairs, and wishing that he had that boy back of the Rocky Mountains for about fifteen minutes; and the

anxious father, with a straw bed in his arms, and his eyes full of dust, is at the head of the stairs, waiting to come down, and vociferating at the top of his voice, until the dust from the tick gets into his throat, and precipitates him into a violent fit of coughing. By the time the third load is on the way, the novelty of helping carry furniture is worn off to the boy; and he and his companions are firing rubbish from the garret at each other, or fooling with the horse just as some heavy object is being lifted on to the cart. The best plan for a moving family that has a boy is to get him a half-bushel of frozen potatoes to throw, and set him out in the suburbs until the affair is over.

A WOMAN'S idea of moving is to wear a pair of odd shoes, her husband's linen duster, a damaged hoopskirt, and a last year's jockey turned hind-side before. Thus formidably attired, with a pocketful of screws, nails, and picture-cords, and a limber-bladed case-knife in one hand, and a broom in the other, she is prepared to believe that something is about to be done. The first move she makes is at the parlor carpet. She takes up two tacks in about fifteen minutes, puts them in a pint saucer, and sets the saucer in the middle of the floor, where it will not be in the way. Then she goes into the hall to tell the carman to be careful in bringing down the large rocking-chair, as her

mother gave it to her. After that she darts into the kitchen, stops suddenly in the middle of the room, and says, "Now, what is it I was going to do?" and then races up stairs with a great bustle, on suddenly remembering that a pair of vases were not packed away with the bedding. But they were packed away; and, when she discovers the fact, she comes back, saying that she has so much to do, she don't really know what she is about. Afterwards she draws out the glass-ware to put it in a barrel; and, after packing away a couple of tumblers and a salt-cellar, takes down her dresses, and examines them with as much care as if she was going to a ball, and the carriage was already at the door. In the midst of this survey she suddenly thinks of something else, and rushes off to attend to it,—the case-knife in one hand, the broom in the other. When the stove is taken down, she is there; when the bureau is being lifted, she is in the exact way of the man who is going backward; when the carman gets up on the best chair to take down a frame, she is there to rebuke him. She attends to every thing. She makes her husband go out doors and clean his feet. She gets in the way when they are moving the ice-chest. She leaves the dust-pan just where the carman's assistant can step on the handle, and have it turn with him at a most unfortunate time. She gets the broom-stick entangled with

her husband's legs, which makes him swear. She tries to lift a two-bushel basket of crockery, and, finding she can't do it, tells the carman she is not so strong as she used to be; and then contents herself with carrying down an old wooden chair, which has just been brought up stairs to be used in removing things from the walls, and which has to be found and brought up again by some one else. But it is in loading where she makes herself conspicuous. She brings out a ten-inch looking-glass, and wants it laid on the bottom of the cart; and she don't want any thing else to go on until she can get her work-basket. She thinks the stove and bed-room set should ride together; and is quite confident, that, if the bureau is permitted to stand on the cart as it does, it will never again be fit to be seen. The carman steps on her, and walks over her, and is swearing all the while down in his throat; but she don't mind him. She knows that that load isn't put on as it ought to be, and that there is room for lots of things yet. She brings on a clock, and a length of damaged stove-pipe, and a pair of old boots covered with mildew, and a small basket of empty spice-boxes, and an old gaiter, and the back of a worn-out vest, and wants them all put on the cart. She says there is plenty of room, and the things will come useful some time, and they don't take up any room anyway; and, just as the cart is moving away, she

rushes after it with a second-hand peach-can stuffed with *débris*, which she successfully introduces into the load, and then comes back in triumph. And, while the carman is gone, she is just as busy as she can be, telling the woman next door that she can put just three times as much stuff on that cart as is on it; and, if she has got to move again, she believes she'll give right up and die.

It is not the moving, so much as the "putting to rights," which is so exhaustive to the nervous forces of the entire family. This is due, in a great measure, to the carelessness in moving. When a man has a great deal to do, and little time to do it in, he takes no thought for the future. He throws a half-dozen screws into a barrel, with an idea that they will turn up all right when he wants them. The main object is to get them in some place *now*. So when he comes to put up the curtain-fixtures in the new house, and finds the ingredients in a mass of confusion, it is simply because he took them down that way, and cared only for present ease, without any regard to future convenience. In putting up the pictures, the nails are found in the bottom of a bureau-drawer under a pile of towels, and the hammer is at the bottom of a barrel of stovepipe in the cellar. Sometimes an hour is consumed in searching for a single stove-leg. The bread

is found rolled up in a carpet in an upper bedroom, the coffee-pot tied up in the bedding, the sugar in a barrel of carpet-rags, the tea-canister in the scuttle under the flatirons, the spoons in with a basket of empty medicine-bottles, and the table-cloth tied up with a half-bushel of tinware. The man does about all the work. The woman goes round with a broom, and sweeps up the soot, and feels of the mouldings to see if they have been damaged, and examines the paint to see if it is marred. She has been up the day before with a hired woman and cleaned the house, and she is very particular about its condition. If she sees a lump of dirt in the hall from the heel of the carman, she carefully hoists it upon the dust-pan, and says that all she is fit for is to slave her life out cleaning, without doing a bit of good ; and then goes half way down the garden to throw the *débris* away. She is ten minutes doing it ; and a man would give it one kick, and send it out of doors in an instant. When she ain't tumbling over the wrong articles, or misplacing the right ones, she is close at his heels, giving advice, and asking him if he thinks a woman is made of cast-iron. When he puts down the carpet, she stands on the breadth he is trying to stretch, and tells him she believes she will drop dead in her tracks if she don't get a chance to sit down pretty soon. Sometimes she is gone from sight for nearly half an hour, and the distant sounds



PUTTING DOWN CARPETS. — Page 162.



of a hammer are heard. When she returns, she has another finger in a rag, and smells stronger than ever of arnica. Then, when the bureau is being moved, and her husband is struggling under his share till every muscle in his body is as stiff as steel, and his face like a beet, and his eyes protruding, and the ends of his fingers aching most acutely, she is round again. They are going over the best carpet ; and she hastens back of him, because his boots are muddy, and, with a show of dexterity, tries to get a length of old rag-carpet over the new in the way he is backing ; and his feet catch in it, and he yells ; and then he stumbles and yells again, and catches himself only to stumble once more, and come down with the bureau on top of him, and the carman on top of the bureau. Then he jumps up, and makes the most extraordinary statement at the top of his voice ; and the carman limps around with his countenance full of reproach ; and she says she has always lived in a hog-pen, and always expects to, and then goes into the next house to have a good crying-spell and a cup of tea.



SUMMER IN DANBURY.



SUMMER IN DANBURY.

TOMMY MIGGS'S VISION.

LITTLE Tommy Miggs was observed to be very restless in school all of Friday morning. It was quite evident to those who observed him that something of unusual importance was resting upon his mind. He missed the easiest questions, and picked up the wrong books, and once tried to do a sum on his slate with a willow whistle. The boy in the next seat to Tommy was the only one who did not wonder at his uneasiness. Five distinct times Tommy found and availed himself of the opportunity to whisper in a sepulchral tone to this young man that his ma was going to have a strawberry shortcake for dinner, and that he was to hurry home just as soon as school was out. There was every encouraging indication in Tommy's manner of the most flattering speed being made between the school and his house when the time came. None of these opportunities for verbal communication were of sufficient length to permit of more

than a hurried announcement of the fact; but, by a series of diagrams hastily improvised with his hands, little Tommy succeeded in conveying to the mind of his friend an idea of the size of the cake, which was to be, without doubt, a "booster."

The moment Tommy got outside the building, he "lit out" for home. Fully two-thirds of the distance he made on a run, and the balance at a quick walk. As he reached the gate, panting heavily, but full of glad purposes, he met his two little brothers. Very little they were too; but there was enough of them to express enough of any sort of deep emotion to attract attention.

"Halloo!" said Tommy, with a sudden sinking of spirits: "is ma sick, Georgy?"

Georgy merely shook his head, as if afraid to open his lips, and thus disclose what was evidently a more dreadful calamity than that which Tommy's inquiry suggested.

"What is it, Toady?" asked Tommy, looking straight in Toady's extended eyes.

"O Tommy!" ejaculated Toady. And then the little fellow dug his knuckles into his eyes, and began to whimper.

"What is it, I tell ye?" And Tommy shook Toady to conceal his agitation.

"Company's come," sputtered Toady.

"Company?" gasped Tommy, catching hold of the post.

"Yes," volunteered little George: "uncle Richard, and aunt Jane, and aunt Ann. And they are goin' to stay to dinner."

It was just as well Tommy had hold of the gatepost, or he must surely have gone over on his back. Poor child! All through that long, hot forenoon he had drawn visions of pastry glory, through which ran the rich heart-blood of the loveliest fruit the gods e'er blessed. The last injunction of his mother had been an unbroken song in his soul during the weary hours; and, every time he was prompted to faint, his flagging spirits were stimulated up to a new life by the vision of the shortcake. Poor child! He slipped heavily into the house. There was his uncle Richard with very fat and bearded fingers clasped across a frightful expanse of abdomen, as if to restrain its devouring tendencies till the right moment. There were also aunts Jane and Ann, both fat, and both, apparently, in a disastrous state of good health. In the terrible state of fear he was in, Tommy would have felt much more comfortable, we have no doubt, in the embrace of a boa-constrictor, rather than under the caresses of his relatives. He tried to get a word to his mother; but she was too busy, and too flustered over the appearance of her unexpected company, to notice Tommy. Dinner was speedily announced; and the family sat down, leaving the children to speculate on futurity in the wood-shed.

It was a mournful group. Tommy sat down on the saw-buck ; Georgy climbed upon the shaving-barrel ; while Toady crouched on the step close to the door leading to the kitchen, where the dinner was going on. The children were directed to play in the yard ; but there was no desire for sport with them. Between three relatives from the country and one shortcake there was not space to crowd the least particle of levity, even with the aid of the sharpest knife. They wanted to get as close as they possibly could to the noise of the fray, although every sound went to their hearts with a great shock.

"Have they started it yet, Toady?" whispered Tommy anxiously.

Toady cautiously raised himself to his feet, crept up to the sill, and, standing on the extreme point of his very little toes, was able, through the crack in the door, to take in a view of the table.

"No," he whispered after an instant delay, and sank back again to his place. A moment later, Tommy again asked if they had started it ; and again Toady mounted cautiously up to his post. The instant he reached the point of survey, he fell back so suddenly as to startle his waiting brothers.

"They've gone at it!" he gasped, his eyes fairly protruding in the excitement he labored under.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Tommy, dropping his head.

"Gosh!" ejaculated Georgy under his breath ;

while an expression of sickening fear crept over his face.

For a full moment there was a silence in the wood-shed. Then Georgy slid down from his barrel, and crept up to the door, and peered through to the table. There was a look of faint expectation on the face he presented to the crack ; but it was dimmed somewhat when he turned it about to his brothers.

"I can't see the plate," he said dejectedly, shaking his head ; "but they're all a-eatin'. It's darned mean, an' I don't care who knows it !" he added in desperation, as he dropped moodily on the splitting-block.

"'Sh !" said Tommy faintly.

"To come in like *that* !" pursued Georgy, apostrophizing the great grievance from its harshest aspect. "I s'pose they smelt that cake all the way, and hain't had none themselves for a year, an' so come in to take ours." And Georgy smiled with a bitterness that was painful in one so young.

"I wish it would choke 'em !" he shortly added.

Tommy tried to give his brother a reproachful look, but did not succeed well ; while the softening about the corners of Toady's mouth might have led a hasty observer to believe that he shared in the wild desire.

The hush that followed was broken by their mother's voice :—

"Do have that *other* piece, Richard. I know you like it."

The emphasized word no sooner struck the ears of the anxious waiters in the shed than they involuntarily clutched hold of their resting-places for support; while the expression of horror which blanched their faces was pitiful to behold.

"I don't care if I do, Susan, seeing you're so free," came the heavy voice of uncle Richard.

"Oh!" came from Tommy's white lips like a shot; and then he sank back on the saw-horse, and dropped the white face on his knees.

Little Toady abruptly rolled off the step on to the ground, too full of grief to make a sound; while the aggressive George, shutting his teeth tight together, marched around the shed, shaking his clinched fists in a way that implied the most dreadful doom to the unsuspecting relatives from the country.

It was when Tommy was back again in school, bending the little white face over his book, and striving with all his might to still the pain in his heart, that the boy in the seat whispered, —

"How's the cake, Tommy?"

But there was no answer.

"Was it an old booster?" asked the boy, trying to compress his enthusiastic expectations into the most cautious whisper.

There was a short, sharp sob from the white lips.

which startled the boy in the next seat, and attracted the attention of the teacher ; while the little head went down on the book, and two little threadbare sleeves coiled around it.

“ What is it, Tommy ? ” said the teacher, coming up.

But Tommy was as noble as he had been sanguine. He would not say that the other boy had been teasing him : he simply drew the patched little sleeves tighter about his head, and gave way to a flood of agonizing tears. She was a sympathetic woman as well as a good teacher. She laid her hand softly on his hair, and tenderly said, —

“ Poor Tommy ! ”

“ And so we, without the blessed privilege of stroking the thin white hair, can say too, —

“ Poor Tommy ! ”

ABOUT A FLY.

WHAT becomes of the flies ? They go somewhere. They are gone all winter, and come back again in the summer, all grown, and ready for business. Scientific men should solve this problem. Every man, woman, and child is interested in knowing where flies go, so as to be able to avoid going there too. Flies have a system which is governed by the hours. In the morning they find their food ; and until noon they will not attend to any thing

else. But in the afternoon they are ready for fun. In the morning, a human being appears to a fly in the light of a lunch-counter. It sweeps down on him, prowls over him, picking up what it can find ; but, if persistently interrupted, it will leave for good, and, taking position near by, give him a look, equivalent to saying, " Hang a hog, anyway ! " and then put off for another field. A fly, if it would keep out of a pauper's grave, has no time to fool away during business-hours. In the afternoon it has leisure. In the afternoon you may brush away a fly a thousand times ; but it will come back again. And, the more you knock at it, the more heartily it enjoys the performance. It is on the same principle a miller flutters about a flame, or a swallow skims around a boy who is trying to split its head open with a lath. There are several ways of getting rid of flies ; but knocking at them is not one of them. That only stimulates them to greater exertions both in your behalf as well as their own : for a fly cannot reason as you can ; and your maddening flourishes are understood by it to be so many invitations to hop in, and have fun. There is nothing small or mean about a fly. Flies are not seen on moving trains or ocean steamers, and rarely on the third floor of a building. But the most popular way to get rid of flies is to hire a livery team, and drive with all speed across the tops of mountains. A very few of the millions of flies

which infest our homes never go away for the winter. After the winter has settled down to work, they retire to an upper corner, and with one eye held shut by a leg, and the other wide open, they lie on their backs, and look up in your face for days at a time.

A GRIEVOUS MISTAKE.

A FEW days ago, a young man who had been sick but a week died. His widow sent word of the mournful event to her brother, who was at work harvesting for a farmer near Croton Falls, N.Y. When he got the intelligence, he made haste to Danbury, some thirty miles; but, owing to delay of several kinds, did not reach here until the friends got back from the burial. The suddenness of the death, and the fact that the man whom he had seen in health but three weeks before was dead and buried, was a severe shock to him. He spoke about it several times in a dazed sort of a way, and would break off, in inquiring the particulars of the last sickness, to comment upon the dreadful suddenness of the affair.

“And now he is buried,” he added at the close of the bereaved women’s recital, “and we shall never see him again. It don’t seem possible that George is gone. Don’t cry, Maria. It’s hard on you; but it can’t be helped. You did every thing

you could to prevent it, you know." He stopped here, and nervously worked his fingers, which were clasped together over his knees. After a moment he added, "It was just three weeks ago last night that he came in with that new black suit. I remember his standing up there by the chair," indicating the spot with his eyes, while his hands still continued to play nervously together, "with 'em on; and how they fitted him! I never see George look so well in all my life as he did that night; and I was speaking to mother about it the next day. And now he is dead and buried. I can't make it seem possible. I" —

"We buried him in that suit of clothes," said she, interrupting, "and" —

"What!"

They were both on their feet now. He stood there with his hands separated and clinched, a ghastly pallor on his face, and his eyes fairly starting from their sockets. Brought to her feet by the strength and suddenness of his exclamation, she stood before him in pallid wonder, with the quiver of a nameless fear on her lips.

"Do you mean ter say," he gasped, "that you chucked a new suit of clothes under ground like that?"

"Tom!" she cried, holding up both hands in a horror of protest.

"Don't Tom me!" he screamed with a bitterness

indescribable. "Don't speak to me at all, you witless woman! I can't bear with you! I hate you! A nice sister *you* are!" It was fearful, the depth of irony in this expression. "*You* deserve a brother, *you* do! Oh, yes! An' him and me the same size too." He clinched his hands tighter than before, and strode up and down the room. "I wonder what keeps me from sinkin' right through this floor," he passionately added. "To grow up with a sister like that, and she a-chuckin good clothes into the ground, with a brother that ain't hardly a decent rag to his back! Forty dollars' worth of clothes for worms to cavort around in!"

And, with a groan of despair, he sank heavily into a seat.

"Tom!" gasped the unhappy woman in a voice of horror, "are you crazy?"

"Crazy!" he shrilly repeated. "If I ain't crazy, is it your fault, you miserable sister! Crazy! It's enough to make the hosts of heaven crazy to see forty dollars' worth of clothes chucked to ten cents' worth of worms."

She buried her white face in her hands, and sobbed outright for shame and agony.

"There's no use crying over spilt milk," he gloomily observed. "You've done it, and that's an end of it, and can now have the consolation of knowin' that you've injured an own brother. Another time I guess you'll be a little more careful how you fire a new suit of clothes into the ground."

And, with this prophecy, he morosely strode out of the house.

MRS. COBLEIGH CALLS HER DOG.

A cow got into Cobleigh's yard Friday morning, and stepped around among a dozen heads of choice late cabbages which that gentleman had cultivated with considerable care and pride. Mr. Cobleigh was not at home; but Mrs. Cobleigh saw the animal, and became very much excited over its presence. It was desirable to get it off the premises as speedily as possible; but Mrs. Cobleigh was painfully limited as to facilities. She was afraid of a cow, and did not dare venture close enough to it to make a clothes-pole serviceable. She had heard that a dog was an efficient agent in the dispersion of a cow; but there was not a dog about. But a bright thought struck the lady. She would *pretend* there was a dog just back of the house, waiting to rush with terrific ferocity upon the marauding beast. So Mrs. Cobleigh set to work, leading off with an earnest whistle, with the following flattering result:—

"Fvew-w-w, fvew-w-w-w — oh, my! Here, Tiger, here! Fvew-w-w, fv — what shall I do? Here, Ponto! here, Carlo! Fvew-w-w-z-s — oh, my gracious! Fvew-w-w — bite him, Jack! Bite him.

Bull! Fvew-w-w-w — oh, dear! oh, dear! Go way, you nasty thing! Scat, I say!”

Mrs. Cobleigh was terribly excited. The cow looked up, and smiled.

“Go away, you hateful object!” she screamed, “or I’ll have you torn to pieces. — Here, Gyp, seize him! Fvew — fvew — fvew! Bite him, Ned! Sick him, Pete! Fvew — fvew-w-w-z-z-s! Oh, gracious goodness!” And the exhausted woman sank down on the door-stone, her face the very essence of despair; while the exertion of her vocal organs in producing the whistle had covered her chin with spray. During the progress of these tactics, seven dogs had gathered in the vicinity, and were now staring through the fence at Mrs. Cobleigh with all-absorbing interest. But the woman, unconscious of their vicinity, continued to breathe heavily, and to look at the cow; while that animal leisurely chewed on the cabbages, and pensively took in the surroundings.

AFTER THE CELEBRATION.

THE 5th of July is so closely associated with the 4th as to be a part of it. We don’t care to think of the 5th on the 4th; but on the 5th we wish the 4th hadn’t been quite so much to us as it was. The American mouth is equally extended on both

days, — shouting over the one, and yawning on the other. The family which celebrates awakes in a cloud of depression. The threads which were precipitately dropped on the 3d, and fearfully entangled on the 4th, must be taken up again on the 5th, and brought out of the snarl, and carried forward as before. If we could bear this in mind at the first, we should save much trouble and annoyance. The re-action from the excesses of the day we celebrate depresses us ; and then to have to take up duties which were too hastily and gladly put off appears to be a very good substitute for the feather which broke the camel's back. In the realization of an anticipation, we rest content to let the future take care of itself.

“That's all right ; I'll attend to it to-morrow ;” or, “Never mind, there'll be plenty of time to do it to-morrow,” — are household words on a 4th of July. The 5th of July is a most handy wastebasket. Every hour, from the eve to the close of the “glorious anniversary,” we are pitching things into it ; and the next day, with tired senses and muscles, we bend over the mass, and sort them out again. It is a dreary task ; but it shall never happen again — shall it ? We drop duties like hot shot ; we sweep aside unperformed cares as so many cobwebs : every thing is thrown recklessly and carelessly down, while we plunge into the excitement of the event. There'll be plenty of time to-

morrow to attend to it all: we are too excited to do any thing now. If the whole world could be swept into eternity as soon as we should finish our celebration, what a grand day the 4th of July would be! We never shall have a perfect 4th until the 5th is exterminated. What a hollow mockery are the burned fire-crackers, and empty Roman candles, and charred pin-wheels, and broken rocket-sticks, the next day! How weak and insignificant look the bunting, and greens, and other decorations! How insipid are the mottoes which excited us the day before! How oppressive are the things to be put to rights, the extra dishes to be washed, the *débris* to be removed? How repulsive appear the every-day clothes which were thrown here, and kicked there, on the morning of the 4th, as if they were never to be donned again! There is a bitterness of spirit as we crawl back into them, which we cannot entirely conceal.

The family temper is fully alive on the 5th. There is but little in the house for breakfast, and scarcely any disposition on the part of the woman to prepare what there is. We all get out of bed on the wrong side, and are prone to think that our display of patriotism the day before amply compensates for all lack of charity now.

There never was such a hot, close, wretched day as this 5th of July. We judge it from the standpoint of a depressed system. The stomach has

been bombarded all the day before by ice-cream and lemonade, and recoils now from food, and in the recoil appears to have kicked us in the roof of the mouth with a pair of decayed overshoes.

"Thank Heaven, 4th of July comes but once a year!" is the spontaneous outburst from a million of hearth-stones on the morning of the 5th.

COMING OUT OF THE SPREE.

THERE was one man who went to sleep with the 4th of July in his arms, under the impression that it was an angel from heaven; and awoke the next morning to find he was being strangled by a demon. He was not what is called a drinking man; but he loved the glass from convivial motives. He was out all day on the 4th, being one of the firemen. He didn't intend to drink much, but just enough to feel good. What he despised above ground was to get drunk himself while his cooler friends kept comparatively sober. He was going to look out for this to-day, and guard against injurious excesses. This he determined before he had taken any thing. With the first glass down, a little dissipation lost its harsh aspect. Besides, those with him appeared to think just as he did. They were not the cold-blooded sort of folks, but

believed in having a good time without any reference to the result. They weren't the sort that would get him drunk, and then make fun of it the next day. Their freedom encouraged him to proceed. As the day progressed, he grew less guarded, and more communicative. He met and got acquainted with a number of brother-firemen visiting town, and received each fresh acquaintance with a heartiness that must have been eminently gratifying. His heart expanded like debt as the hours rolled on. He wanted to treat everybody. More than that, he was delighted with everybody, and was particular that everybody should drink. He didn't believe in doing these things on a half-shell; and kindly continued to assure everybody in the company of the fact, although it was evident that talking was becoming painfully difficult to him. He grew more and more affectionate and more and more demonstrative with that excellent trait as the night drew near. Once in a while he came across one who was a veteran in the art of drinking, and who could not be beguiled into promiscuous inundation of self and sweet confidences. These stony faces tended to make him uneasy, and finally to fill him with pain. After a while, the light of intelligence began to flicker in its socket; and, after a few fitful flashes, the flame went out together.

It was the morning of the 5th when he awoke, and quite early in the morning at that; for the in-

experienced drunkard is a light sleeper. There was a confused expression on his mind, as if the broad daylight which struck his eyes had also suddenly pierced to his brain ; but the awful fact that he was awake, and not dreaming, came upon him with terrific, flattening force. This was his own room. How came he here ? He had no memory of reaching it himself. Was he brought here ? Sickening thought ! Who brought him ? Who has seen him ? Any of the neighbors ? Any of his friends ? What did he do ? What awful silliness was he guilty of during that carousal ? He would give the world to know every circumstance of his conduct during that fearful day, and yet recoils in horror from the thought. His head throbs, his flesh is feverish, his tongue swollen, and his joints ache. He tries his best to recall every detail of yesterday's debauch. If he can only remember every thing he has done, he is comparatively safe from the innuendoes of those who saw him, as he can prepare for every attack. But he can make no satisfactory survey of the performance. He remembers how he started off ; but things grow more and more indistinct in consecutive occurrence ; while here and there flash out incidents which cause his heart to sink within him, and his face to burn with shame, — sentiments that he expressed, promises that he gave, invitations that he extended, exhibitions of himself made before sober people ;

while the darkness of his mind is peopled with a score of horrid absurdities whose nature he cannot fathom, but which he is confident some one saw and remembers. He tries to hope for the best, and is momentarily buoyed up, only to be cast down farther than before. Then he curses the drink with penitential earnestness, and solemnly swears he will never touch another drop. There is comfort in this resolution; but he no sooner grasps it than it is suddenly wrenched away from him in an overpowering flood of recollections of his folly. Again he becomes desperate, and determines to brave it out, and to show that the debauch is not a new thing to him by going on another in the same company. But remorse comes in, and kicks this prop from under him; and he rolls over, and groans in the agony of his despair. Why was he such an ass? Why was he such an idiot? Would that he had died before he saw the men whom yesterday he hugged, whom at no other time would he have noticed, and whom now he loathes with all the strength of his being! What a head, what a mouth, what a mind, that man carries with him all day of the 5th of July! He shrinks from going out on the street; and yet he dare not stay in all day, lest those who were with him will think that he is completely floored. And so he goes out among his fellow-men, shrinking from their gaze, avoiding those places which he remembers visiting,

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and wondering with exquisite agony if those he passes were distinguished by his presence, and what phase of his awful idiocy he exhibited there. At every sound and voice he starts, expecting every moment to meet or be overtaken by some one who witnessed his shame and is only too glad to recall the particulars to his attention. He is settled in no purpose but one ; and that is, to shut square off on drinking. Never again will another drop of liquor pass his lips, never, — never again. And let no man pull down his vest.

A PREMATURE CELEBRATION.

THE firemen had a parade Saturday. It was a fine affair ; but the absence of Mr. O'Clarence was deeply felt, not only by the department, but by the public. His long and faithful services at the business-meetings and festivals, and his splendid bearing on parade, have given Mr. O'Clarence an enviable position in the hearts of his countrymen. We are sorry he was not present Saturday ; but an unlooked-for and very painful accident deprived him and us of a great pleasure. The night which preceded the last anniversary of our national independence, he took home twenty-five dollars' worth of fireworks for a splurge on the next night. He calculated he had glory enough in that package to

fill with gratitude and admiration every tax-payer on North Street ; and his wife, after carefully examining the lot, was equally confident that the neighbors would see something that would "make their eyes bung out," as she pensively expressed it. The next morning, O'Clarence took out the bundle to look it over again, and feed on the anticipation. There were these cannon-crackers, — several packs, — and Roman candles, and blue-fire, and pin-wheels, and rockets, and the like ; a very creditable assortment for any family. Mr. Wickford's boy, from the next house, was in, and sat on the floor, holding a piece of lighted punk in his hand, and had both his eyes and mouth wide open, enjoying the sight. O'Clarence was sitting on his haunches, holding a pin-wheel in his hand, and explaining to Mrs. O'Clarence how cheaply they could be made in China, and how superior in ingenuity and industry were the Chinese to all other races. None of them know how it happened ; but O'Clarence remembers that there were two open packs of cannon-crackers just under him, and thinks Wickford's boy must have in some way dropped the punk in among them, and, in the general interest, forgotten that it was afire. At any rate, there was a sudden siss right under Mr. O'Clarence, followed in the next instant by a tornado of sounds and sparks ; and that gentleman at once shot toward the ceiling in a blaze of various-

colored lights, while the air became thick with sparks, blue-lights, blazing balls, industrious pin-wheels, insane sky-rockets, and screeching crackers. Mrs. O'Clarence fell over a chair that cost eight dollars when new, and struck the back of her head against the stove-hearth with a violence that added materially to the display of fireworks already going on. Wickford's boy was struck in the mouth with a sky-rocket, and had two-thirds of his hair taken off by a Roman candle, and was knocked through a doorway by a piece of ordnance just introduced this season, and which will undoubtedly become popular when understood better. He was afterward fished out of a rose-bush, and taken home in a table-cloth. O'Clarence remained during the entire exhibition, looking at it from various positions ; and, when it was over with, he was put in a sheet by the neighbors, and saturated with oil, and then covered with molasses and flour. We learn that new skin is already forming on parts of him ; and, if no unfavorable symptoms set in, he will be out again in a fortnight, although it is not likely he will mingle much in society until his hair and eyebrows commence to grow. He thinks Wickford's boy is dead ; and they dare not tell him to the contrary, until he gets stronger. Singularly enough, Mrs. O'Clarence escaped injury by burns : but the blow on her head was so severe, that she cannot bear to have her back-hair drawn up as

high as it was before ; and missing her church-privileges is a sore trial to her.

MR. COLLINS'S CROQUET SET.

CROQUET, that eminently fascinating game, was introduced on the premises of the Collinses Friday. In the afternoon, Podge's boy brought up the set ; and, just before tea, Mrs. Collins arranged the wickets. Collins had learned to play when visiting in Glovershire last summer, and Mrs. Collins acquired an indifferent knowledge of the game from two elderly maiden sisters on Paxton Street ; and so, on that delicious Friday afternoon, they took out the mallets and balls, and commenced the game.

"Now, Emmeline," playfully observed Mr. Collins, "don't you begin cheating at the start. If you do, the game will be prostituted to mere gambling, an' we'll injure our moral natures in trying to build up our physical."

"People who are so ready to charge against others need close watching themselves, young man," said she in the same spirit ; "and I mean to keep a sharp eye on you."

Then they both laughed.

"But it will be a good thing for you, Emmeline," he said, with a tinge of tenderness in his voice.

"You are kept cooped up in the house so, that you hardly get a breath of fresh air. This will give you exercise, and keep you out doors too."

"You are always thinking of me," said she as her eyes grew moist. "You need the out-door air as much as I do ; but you are too unselfish to think of yourself."

And, thus exchanging sentiments which did credit to both their hearts, the game progressed.

After passing through the centre wicket, Mr. Collins used her ball to help himself through the other wickets to the upper stake. Then he left her near the first wicket, and struck for the stake, which, being about eight inches distant, made him over-confident. The ball missed by about an eighth of an inch.

"I declare !" he exclaimed in vexation.

Then she, having watched his rapid progress with a clouded face, now struck for him, and hit him ; and a minute later his ball was spinning through the grass to the other end of the ground. She was now in position for her wicket, and passed through it and the others to the stake, but missed it. Then he came up by a well-directed blow to within two inches of the stake. But she went for him again ; and, when she got through, she was three wickets beyond the stake, and his ball was at the other end of the ground again, and his brow was finely corrugated. He stepped nerv-

ously toward it. It was quite evident that he was not unruffled. When his turn came again, he drove back to the stake, but struck a wicket, and rebounded so close to her, that she easily hit him, and again introduced him through wickets he was not for, and then sent him flying again. Her success caused her to laugh, and he heard it.

"You think you are pretty smart ; but I'll get even with you," he said, without smiling.

"You'll have to play better than you have done," she pertinently suggested.

"I think I know as much about croquet as you do," he said, still with a straight face.

"You don't play as if you did," she retorted.

"If you'd had any fairness about you, you'd let me had that stroke over when I was up to the stake. You knew I slipped, as well as I did," he said, growing red in the face.

"No, I didn't know any thing about it," she replied, taking on a little color.

"I say you did."

"And I say I didn't. But, if you are going to play this game, why don't you go ahead?"

"I'll play when I get ready," he answered, turning white about the mouth.

"If you ain't going to play, you'd better go into the house and shut up," she suggested, raising her voice.

"Don't you talk to me in that way," he cried, "or I'll make you sorry for it, you brazen-faced hussy!"

"Hussy, hussy!" she screamed. "Ain't you ashamed of yourself, John Jacob Collins, to call your wife a hussy? Hussy, am I? you old villain! Hussy is it? you miserable brute! I'm to be called a hussy, am I, after working my knuckles off for you, and slaving for thirty years after your crooked carcass? There!" she cried in a paroxysm, throwing the mallet on the ground, "take your old croquet, and shove it down your lying throat, and choke yourself to death with it, if you want to, you miserable old wretch! And don't you never ask me to play with you again, or I'll tell you something you'll remember the longest day you live, you old devil!"

And then she bounced into the house, leaving him standing out there, and rubbing his head in a benumbed sort of way. But, almost immediately after, she thrust her head out of the window, and snapped out, "You needn't think you are going to get any hot biscuit for your tea in this house this night, young man; and you can put that in your pipe and smoke it just as soon as you are a mind to."

PUTTING DOWN THE WINDOWS.

THIS is the season of the year when a man may expect to be suddenly called at any moment in the night to get up and put down the windows. On

the advent of a thunder-shower, it is rarely that a man wakes first: if he should, he keeps quiet so as not to disturb his wife, and avails himself of the first lull to go to sleep again. How differently a woman acts! — oh, so differently! Just as soon as she wakes up, and hears that it is raining, she seems to lose all judgment at once. She plants both of her feet into her husband's back, at the same time catching him by the hair, and shaking his head, and hysterically screams, —

“Get up! get up quick! It's a-pouring right down in torrents, and all the windows are up!”

He cannot wake up, under such circumstances, with an immediately clear conception of the case: in fact, it frequently happens that he is way out on the floor before his eyes are fairly open, having but one idea really at work, and that as to what he is doing out of bed. The first thing to do is to strike a light; and while he is moving around for the matches, and swearing that some one has broken into the house and moved them from where he laid them on going to bed (which is always plausible enough), she hurls after him the following tonics: —

“Do hurry! Mercy, how that rain is coming right into those windows! We won't have a carpet left if you don't move faster. What on earth are you doing all this time? Can't find the matches? Mercy sake! you ain't going to stum-

ble round here looking for matches, are you, when the water is drowning us out? Go without a light! What a man you are! I might have better got up in the first place. Well (despairingly), let the things go to ruin, if you are a mind to. I've said all I'm going to, an' I don't care if the whole house goes to smash. You *always* would have your own way, an' I s'pose you always will; and now you can do as you please: but don't you dare to open your mouth to me about it when the ruin's done. I've talked an' talked till I'm tired to death, and I sha'n't talk any more. We never could keep any thing decent, and we never can; an' so that's the end of it. [A very brief pause.] *John Henry, are you, or are you not,* going to shut down those windows?"

Just then he finds the matches, and breaks the discourse by striking a light. He was bound to have that help before he moved out of the room. He has got the lamp lighted now. No sooner does its glare fill the room than he immediately blows it out again for obvious reasons. He had forgotten the windows were open and the brevity of his night-shirt. It almost causes him to shiver when he thinks of his narrow escape. He moves out into the other room with celerity now. He knows pretty well the direction to go; and, when a flash of lightning comes, it shows him on the verge of climbing over a stool or across the centre-table. If there is a rocking-chair in the house, he will strike

it. A rocking-chair is much surer in its aim than a streak of lightning. It never misses, and it never hits a man in but one spot; and that is just at the base of his shin. We have fallen against more than eight hundred rockers of all patterns and prices, and always received the first blow in the one place. We have been with dying people, and have heard them affirm in the solemn hush of that last hour that a rocking-chair always hits a man on the shin first.

And, when a man gets up in the dead of night to shut down windows, he never misses the rocking-chair. It is the rear end of one of the rockers which catches him. It is a dreadful agony. But he rarely cries out: he knows his audience too well. A woman never falls over a rocking-chair; and she never will understand why a man does. But she can tell whether he has, by the way he puts down the windows when he finally reaches them. A rocking-chair window (if we may be allowed the term) can be heard three times as far as any other.

AN INEXPENSIVE CELEBRATION.

ONE of the most painful of the accidents happening on Independence Day occurred to a family living on Osborne Street. Two of the young sons had improvised a cannon from an old gun-barrel.

The father gave them a pound of powder, and took a lively interest in the firing. It was not an ornamental piece; but it made a most astonishing noise, which is of more importance.

"Ram her down tight this time," suggested the exultant father, a little impatient to increase the sound.

"But what will the neighbors think?" mildly protested his wife. "You'll jar their heads off."

"Fudge on their heads! This is the glorious Fourth, and it don't come but once a year. — Ram her down, boys, an' make her sing."

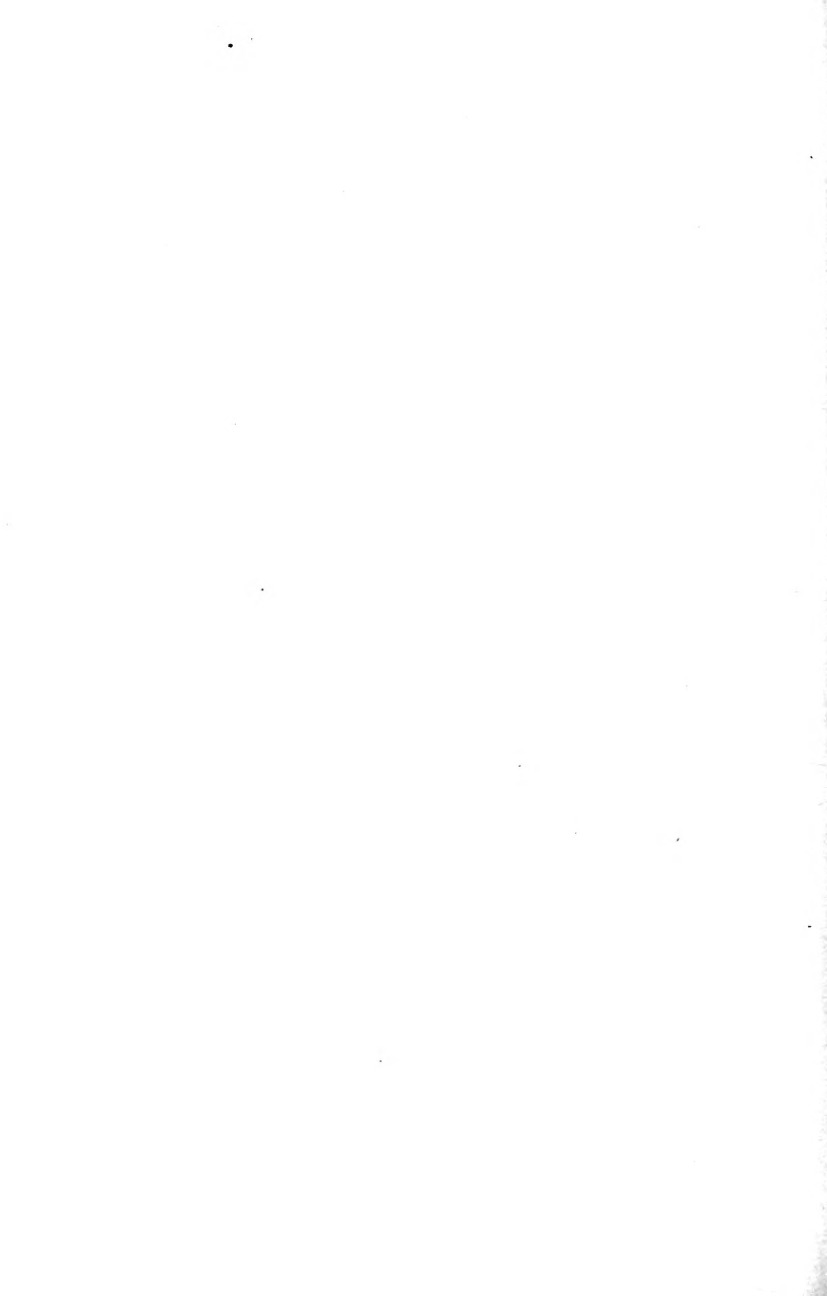
They did. They worked like veterans, and put in a lot of grass, and hammered away at the wadding like a pair of pile-drivers. Then they fixed it for touching off. The father was sitting on the fence, weaving to and fro, and smiling with all his might. The match was applied. There was a hiss, a flash, and then a discharge which seemed to shake the very centre of the earth. At the same instant, the patriotic father left the fence backwards, and went crashing end over end into the next lot, his eyes and mouth driven full of dirt and sand. The piece had exploded; and a portion of the barrel, weighing nearly two pounds, flew across the yard with such force as to completely rend the seats from two pairs of new overalls hanging on a line, and then ploughed into the earth just in front of the owner of the garments, knocking him over,

as stated. When he got on his feet, and his eyes and senses sufficiently cleared to learn what had happened, he unhesitatingly said, —

“Come, now, there’s been enough of this cussed foolishness for one day.”



AUTUMN IN DANBURY.



AUTUMN IN DANBURY.

A FRIGHTFUL MISCALCULATION.

A SERIOUS phase of disease is that which attacks a boy on a day when he particularly objects to going to school. He tells his mother, with the confiding frankness peculiar to youth, that he does not feel well this morning. He don't know what it is; but he is lame in the joints, and his head aches, and his stomach don't feel a bit good. He moves about slowly; openly refuses food; looks dejected, negligent, unhappy. Quite frequently he can be heard to sigh. But, in all his pain, he never forgets the clock. As time advances to the hour which marks school-time, his symptoms increase. He doesn't say a word about school to his mother: he feels too dreadful, perhaps, to talk of such things. He is certainly in a bad way. His sighs increase as the dreaded time approaches, and the physical symptoms of decay grow more and more manifest. But the greatest suffering he endures mentally. Fifteen minutes to nine is the

time he should start. It lacks but ten minutes of that time ; and nothing has been said to him about getting ready. He wants to believe he is all right, because that is the prompting of hope, which is strong in the youthful breast ; but yet he refuses to believe he is, because he fears the re-action of disappointment. Every time he hears his mother's voice, he is startled ; and, every time he detects her looking toward him, he feels his heart sink within him. It is a hard thing, indeed, to appear outwardly languid and listless and drooping, when inwardly one is a roaring furnace of agony ; but he does it, and does it admirably. It now lacks five minutes of the quarter : still she says nothing. His nervousness is almost maddening. Four minutes, three minutes, two minutes, one minute : still she makes no sign. Will his reason forsake him ?

It is the quarter. Now he should start, according to custom. One would think he had every encouragement now ; but he knows, that, even at five minutes later, he can make school by hurrying. The agony of the suspense becomes exquisite. He trembles all over, and he cannot help it. His hair is moist with perspiration. It seems as if he would give up every thing, and sink into the grave, if he could but know the result. How slowly the clock moves ! It stares at him with exasperating stoniness. The ten minutes are reached : he

breathes easier. Not a word has been said to him about school. His mother sees that he is too ill to go, and she sympathizes with him. Heaven bless her! Did ever a boy have such a good, noble mother as this? Visions of sunny fields, and shady woods, and running streams, unfold before him, stirring the very depths of his soul, and filling his eyes with tears of gladness.

“John!”

Like a great shock the beautiful pictures fall away, and he is shot from the pinnacle of hope into the abyss of despair. There is no mistaking the voice.

“Mercy sakes! here you are not ready for school! Come, start your boots.”

“I — I don’t feel well enough to go to school,” he whines, hardly realizing the dreadful change that has come upon him with such blighting force and swiftness.

“I guess you ain’t dying, quite,” is the heartless reply; and, if you ain’t in school, you will be galloping over the neighborhood. Hurry, I tell you.”

“But it is almost nine o’clock, and I’ll be late,” he protests in desperation.

“Late?” she repeats, looking at the clock. “You’ve got plenty of time. *That clock is nearly a quarter of an hour fast.*”

Merciful heavens! He goes down before the terrific blow in a flash. *A quarter of an hour fast!*

Bleeding at every pore of his heart, stunned by a shock which was as terrible as unexpected, he crawls inside of his jacket and under his hat, and starts on his way in a dazed manner that is pitiful to behold.

AN ORNAMENTAL STOVE.

THE idea is just suggested, that an ornamental stove be put in the market ; not merely an ornamental article, but one that is artistic, — one that will adorn as well as comfort the home-circle. It is a good idea, and has our hearty support. In fact, we are anxious about it. The stove has no nobler friend than the editor of this paper, — no one who has given it such careful, intelligent study, — no one who has so faithfully tried to understand it. So we feel a peculiar right to speak out. The article from which we gather the suggestion says that there is no reason why there should not be a costly stove. We don't exactly understand what is meant by this. Every stove we have had any thing to do with was costly enough. But perhaps the writer refers to the market-price. If so, we coincide with him. Stoves have been made with a view to combine beauty and utility with economy. But we suppose the people are now ripe for a stove that will be an adornment without reference to the price, — just as they feel in regard to pictures,

vases, &c. An article in bronze or polished steel, with French-plate micas, mahogany doors, and German-silver cornice, with an electro-plated scuttle, and a pearl-handled poker, would not be a bad idea. Such a stove, enclosed in a rosewood cabinet, and dusted off twice a day by a team of ostriches hired expressly for that purpose, could not fail of elevating and ennobling the atmosphere of any home. Its artistic loveliness would render its removal unnecessary in the spring; and this of itself would save its cost in a very little time. But, even should it have to be moved, what of it? No man with the least discernment of the beautiful in his nature would object to being bucked in the abdomen by a German-silver cornice, or skinning his knuckles on a mahogany door, or even to plunging headlong over an electro-plated scuttle; and as for sliding backwards down an entire flight of stairs with so much of the chaste and beautiful in his arms at once, nothing would compare to it in the way of luxurious sensations.

Let us have an artistic stove, by all means, with alabaster boots to put against it.

GOING TO SLEEP IN CHURCH.

DID you ever go to sleep in church? We don't mean to ask if you have done so deliberately.

Of course you haven't. You put your head on the back of the seat in front, just to rest it and to think of the sermon. The words of the preacher are very distinct to you at first. They present something for your mind to take hold of, and to wrestle intellectually with. Then they calm you and soothe you. They become a lullaby that floats through your brain, gently filling in the crevices, and giving you a blissful sense of rest. They merge themselves so imperceptibly with your most distant thoughts as to lose their identity. Farther and farther away they sound, until they have disappeared entirely. The scene suddenly changes. You are in the midst of a maddened mob. There is a struggle on your part to save yourself from their violence. You strike out and kick out, and squirm and wrench yourself. It is a desperate struggle. Every muscle in your body stands out like whip-cords; every nerve is stretched to its utmost. You succeed in getting free of the mass. Then you start on a run, with the pack running after you. You cry out for help; you shriek at the top of your voice for succor. Blindly galloping along, you come unexpectedly to a precipice. You make an herculean effort to save yourself; but it is too late. With a scream of terror you go over its edge, and are hurled headlong into the dreadful abyss below. Then you awake. You have hit your head on the back of the pew. For

a moment there is a dreadful vagueness as to your whereabouts : the next moment brings with it the realization that you are in church. The words of the minister awake you to this consciousness with awful distinctness. What did you do in that dream? is a query that takes hold of you with frightful force. Did you throw your arms in the air? Did you kick the bench? Did you scream out? The perspiration gathers in great drops on your face, and sharp flashes of heat shoot along your spine, while there is sinking enough in the pit of your stomach to start a shaft in a gold-mine. You dare not look up. You can imagine every eye in the assembly is turned upon you, waiting to confront you face to face. It is a dreadful feeling, — so dreadful, that it finally becomes unbearable ; and finally you slowly raise your head, and gradually, but furtively, glance about you. The congregation is as you left them. Not an eye is turned towards you ; and you might believe that you had not been asleep at all, were it not for the awakening of one leg, accompanied by all the poignant sensations of that operation.

GOING TO THE FIRE.

THERE is nothing so dreadful as the cry of "Fire" in the night, — unless it is discovering,

after getting your clothes on wrong, that it was a false alarm. There is a significance to a cry of "Fire" in a village, which the city knows not of. In a city, the aroused citizen, on satisfying himself that the disaster is not near his own premises, retires to bed in the comforting assurance that he will feast on the particulars in the morning. But, in a small community, every man is a neighbor: he knows everybody else, and takes a deep interest in his affairs,—especially in his disaster. He would no more think of remaining in bed on a cry of "Fire" than he would of remaining in his grave on the cry of Gabriel. So, when the alarm sounds, the whole community is aroused, and in a state of intense excitement. The first dash the awakened citizen makes is over two chairs and a table to the window. He catches a sight of the flames, and, immediately locating the scene of the conflagration, goes over the chairs and table again in a search for his clothes. He would strike a light: but, the instant he touches the match-safe, it upsets, and throws its contents to the floor; and he might feel around in the dark for them seven years, without finding one of them. But, darkness or no darkness, he is deadly earnest. He prances around like a madman; and every shout and hurrying footstep going by add fresh impetus to his movements. And, every other time his bare foot descends, it comes down on the heel of an overturned shoe, and nearly overthrows

him. These shoes are under his feet all the time till he comes to need them ; and then he has to flop down on his knees, and prowl over the entire floor, before finding them. It is awful to be in such a nervous state in the dark. To pick up your wife's clothes ten times to where you do your own once ; to strike your naked toes against the casters of the bed ; to step on the round of a chair instead of on the floor ; to get on your pants, and then discover you have left off the drawers ; to try to find the other arm-hole to your vest ; to get the left shoe on the right foot three times in succession ; to pull with all your might on a tight stocking, and find that the heel is on top of your foot, — all these things are awful. But the climax of the horror is trying to get into a pair of drawers, one leg of which is wrong side out. You are too excited to discover the error ; although, if you should give the matter an instant of thought, you would understand that a man never leaves that garment in any other shape on retiring for the night. But you are too crazed by excitement to think. The whole building may be burned to the ground before you get there ; and this reflection, together with the awful thought that the fire may be put out before doing much damage, completely unnerves you. Every movement you have made about the room has tended to confuse that most valuable garment ; and when you finally secure it, and jab your foot at it

for an opening, the perspiration rolls down your face to a degree that is blinding. But it is after getting one foot in, and while waving the other around for the other leglet, — that leglet which is turned inside out, — that the real agony commences. The thoughts that fill a man's mind as he reels about like a drunken man, and madly jabs the wondering foot at the garment in unsuccessful thrusts, cannot be properly depicted. How he perspires ! how he breathes ! how he foams at the mouth ! how he sobs and swears !

AN EXASPERATING ARTICLE.

Now that the house-cleaning is over, a new exasperation sets in. This is the tidies. All winter long they have been making. The woman from the next house has either been in and on her knees, examining your wife's worsted and patterns, or your wife has been on her knees over there, examining hers. It is the same thing. About a quarter ton of worsted has been used up. It has been over the floor, or the tables, or bureau-tops, pretty much all of the time. It has got entangled with the comb and razor-strop, and other things which you have wanted. Its favorite receptacle has been the handkerchief-drawer ; and every time you have wanted a handkerchief has been the signal for a

pitched battle with that contemptible worsted. Once in a while it has been left on a chair, the crochet-needles sticking upward: this has instructed, if it hasn't amused you. The house has been put to rights; and that mass of worsted and needles, having evolved into block-flowers, step-ladder angels, and crooked butterflies, is now spread out on the backs of the easiest chairs and the sofas. We don't like tidies. We don't object to them as works of art; but we dislike them because of the irritation they cause. They are designed to set off a chair; but it is the man who sets off that chair. When the head of the house comes home at night, wearied with toil and argument, and drops into the easy-chair, the action may be strictly construed into a direct effort to be comfortable. He leans his head back, and closes his eyes. She pounces on him at once. "Merciful goodness" is all she is able to exclaim as she bounces his head from the work of art. She does recover sufficient breath, however, to wonder "what on earth a man can be thinking of to lay his greasy head against a tidy. But that's just the way when one tries to be a little decent, and have the house look a mite respectable." As he cannot sit bolt upright in an easy-chair, Nature never having intended he should, he sneaks off to a sofa, and drops down there. He has just got fixed so he can close his eyes and think, when he is suddenly lifted by the hair, and opens his eyes to behold a horrified

woman, with an apparently petrified finger pointed directly at a ruffled tidy.

"My dear," says he meekly, "is there any substantial objection to my going out and perching myself on a clothes-line?"

But the sarcasm is lost on her.

"What's the use," she angrily demands, "for your lopping yourself down on any thing like a great horse? Why don't you sit on a chair like anybody else?"

To be sure. Why don't he?

GETTING YOUR PICTURE.

THE operator is just about to withdraw the cloth. His back is toward you. The index-finger of his unoccupied hand mutely marks the place for your eye. Every nerve in your body is braced for the ordeal. The cloth is drawn; and the noiseless and unseen fingers of the prepared plate are picking up your features one by one, and transferring them to its mysterious surface. What an influence is this you are under, and which you cannot explain, which weakens every nerve, and untossens every cord and muscle, and sets free upon and over you a myriad of sensations you never knew before! The eye of the camera glares upon you like the eye of an offended and threatening power. Prickling sensa-

tions are felt in your scalp; and a heat evolved within with amazing rapidity flushes to the surface of your body, and leaves it pierced with a thousand pains. You stare at the mark with an intensity that threatens to obliterate your sight. Heavens! how slowly the time drags! Your eyes grow weaker and weaker, filling with water as they die out. You know that they are closing; but you cannot help yourself. Will he never put back that cloth? A thousand reflections upon your appearance, on the sounds in the streets, on things irreverent, and disastrous to your composure, flood your mind, and take such hold upon you, that you cannot shake them off. And yet no move to restore that cloth. He stands like a statue cut from flint, and you quivering from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, with eyes blinded by tears, with perspiration oozing from every pore, and every muscle strained until it seems ready to snap, and let you down upon the floor, a mass of disfigured and palpitating flesh. He need not put up the cloth *now*. The opportunity which he controlled to reproduce you in perfection is gone. It matters not now how it looks, only that you get away, and be at rest. You grow hysteric in your despair. It settles down upon you like a cloud, compressing your throat within its grasp, until your breath surges back on to your lungs as if it would rend them. A weight is pressing upon you. You struggle to wrench your-

self free from the dreadful oppression, and yet not a muscle of your body is in motion. What dreadful thing is this? You must shriek; you — The cloth is up; the thirty seconds have expired; and you are photographed.

A WOMAN'S POCKET.

THE most difficult thing to reach is a woman's pocket. This is especially the case if the dress is hung up in a closet, and the man is in a hurry. We think we are safe in saying that he always is in a hurry on such an occasion. The owner of the dress is in the sitting-room, serenely engrossed in a book. Having told him that the article which he is in quest of is in her dress pocket in the closet, she has discharged her whole duty in the matter, and can afford to feel serene. He goes at the task with a dim consciousness that he has been there before, but says nothing. On opening the closet-door, and finding himself confronted with a number of dresses, all turned inside out, and presenting a most formidable front, he hastens back to ask, "Which dress?" and being told the brown one, and also asked if *she* has so *many* dresses that there need be any great effort to find the right one, he returns to the closet with alacrity, and soon has his hands on the brown dress. It is inside out,

like the rest, — a fact he does not notice, however, until he has made several ineffectual attempts to get his hand into it. Then he turns it around very carefully, and passes over the pocket several times without being aware of it. A nervous moving of his hands and an appearance of perspiration on his forehead are perceptible. He now dives one hand in at the back, and, feeling around, finds a place, and proceeds to explore it, when he discovers that he is following up the inside of a lining. The nervousness increases, also the perspiration. He twitches the dress on the hook ; and suddenly the pocket, white, plump, and exasperating, comes to view. Then he sighs the relief he feels, and is mentally grateful he did not allow himself to use any offensive expressions. It is all right now. There is the pocket in plain view, — not the inside, but the outside, — and all he has to do is to put his hand right around in the inside, and take out the article. That is all. He can't help but smile to think how near he was to getting mad. Then he puts his hand around to the other side. He does not feel the opening. He pushes a little farther. Now he has got it. He shoves the hand down, and is very much surprised to see it appear opposite his knees. He had made a mistake. He tries again : again he feels the entrance, and glides down it, only to appear again as before. This makes him open his eyes, and straighten his face. He feels of the

outside of the pocket, pinches it curiously, lifts it up, shakes it, and, after peering closely about the roots of it, he says, "By gracious!" and commences again. He does it calmly this time, because hurrying only makes matters worse. He holds up breadth after breadth; goes over them carefully; gets his hand first into a lining, then into the air again (where it always surprises him when it appears), and finally into a pocket, and is about to cry out with triumph, when he discovers that it is the pocket to another dress. He is mad now. The closet air almost stifles him. He is so nervous, he can hardly contain himself; and the pocket looks at him so exasperatingly, that he cannot help but "plug" it with his clinched fist, and immediately does it. Being somewhat relieved by this performance, he has a chance to look about him, and sees that he has put his foot through a bandbox, and into the crown of his wife's bonnet; has broken the brim to his Panama hat, which was hanging in the same closet; and torn about a yard of bugle-trimming from a new cloak. As all this trouble is due directly to his wife's infatuation in hanging up her dresses inside out, he immediately starts after her, and, impetuously urging her to the closet, excitedly and almost profanely intimates his doubts of there being a pocket in the dress anyway. The cause of the unhappy disaster quietly inserts her hand inside the robe, and directly brings it forth

with the sought-for article in its clasp. He doesn't know why ; but this makes him madder than any thing else.

THE CARPET AT THE DOOR.

SOME women much prefer to use a bit of rag-carpet in place of a regular-made mat at their doors. It is a good idea. If there is any thing better calculated to attract a man's attention than a rag-carpet at a door, we don't know of it. It causes more hard feeling, and is productive of more hard and unforgiving words, than any article about the house, excepting always the family hammer. Three pieces of rag-carpet thus situated will bankrupt an upright man inside of a fortnight, and turn a happy home into an uproarious and outrageous Bedlam. Not one man in one hundred can go through a door thus protected without catching his foot in that carpet, to the great danger of flinging himself violently to the floor, and flattening his nose. And it not only twists his legs, but it drags over the sill, and catches the door as he shuts it, and starts his temper afresh. It being too degrading and unmanly to stoop down and remove the obstacle with his hand, he gives it a kick, and is surprised to see how easy it is to miss it. He fetches another and more vicious kick at it, and succeeds in removing about an inch of it. Then

he swings the door to, and, setting his teeth together, attempts to shut it over the obstacle. The more the obstruction resists him, the more desperately he pushes. This is on the generally-received and very agreeable theory, that inanimate things are human in so far as it is human to be vicious and obstinate. It is the principle which induces a boy to pound a stick of wood which flies up and hits him. Having convinced himself that the building will not sufficiently give to permit of shutting the door without removing the carpet, the carpet is kicked away (it is never *laid* away); and it is either kicked the whole length of the hall, or tumbled in a heap just outside the sill, where the next person appearing catches both feet into it, and shoots into the room with hair erect, eyeballs protruding, and feet madly and passionately endeavoring to recover their balance. ●

A SERIOUS PROBLEM.

A READER who is recently married writes us, asking which end of a stove is the lightest. We really wish we knew; but we don't. A stove is very deceiving; and one has to become well acquainted with a new one to find its points of advantage. Our friend should not be too hasty in taking hold of a stove. A stove that is to be

moved should be visited in the still watches of the night before, and carefully examined by the light of a good lamp. The very end we thought the lightest may prove the heaviest (in fact, is extremely likely to); or it may be that the lightest end is the most difficult to get hold of and hang on to. It is a very distressing undertaking to carry a half ton of stove by your finger-nails, with a cold-blooded man easily holding the other end, and a nervous woman — with a dust-pan in one hand, and a broom in the other — bringing up the rear, and getting the broom between your legs. In going up stairs, it is best to be at the lower end of the stove.

Going backwards up a stairway with a stove in your hands requires a delicacy of perception which very few people possess, and which can only come after years of conscientious practice. If you are below, you have the advantage of missing much that must be painful to a sensitive nature. The position you are in brings your face pretty close to the top of the stove; and, as no one can be expected to see what is going on when thus situated, you are relieved from all responsibility and thought in the matter, with nothing to do but to push valiantly ahead, and think of heaven. Then above you is the carman, whom you do not see, with his lips two inches apart, his eyes protruding, and his tongue lolling on his chin. And it is well you don't see him; for it is an awful sight. But the chief advan-

tage of being below is, that, in case of the stove falling, you will be caught beneath it, and instantly killed. Nothing short of your death will ever compensate for the scratched paint, soiled carpet, and torn oil-cloth ; and no man in his senses, and with his hearing unimpaired, would want to survive the catastrophe.

FIGHTING THE WIND.

THE wind is governed by atmospheric changes and coal-ashes. We don't know positively which has the greater influence ; but we are inclined to stake our all on coal-ashes. We do not believe that all the atmosphere about us can control the wind to the degree that one hod of coal-ashes can when passing through a sieve in the hands of a man who has got his best suit of clothes on. We remember an occasion when the wind was blowing direct from the west, and had been blowing from that direction all day, and bade fair to blow straight from that direction as long as there was any direction left, that a man (whose name we need not mention), dressed in his best suit of clothes, and with pomade on his hair, stood on the west side of a sieve of coal-ashes, and undertook to screen them. We remember too, — and we remember it with a vividness that is quite remarkable, — that, when he had gyrated that sieve about three times, that



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western gale veered around to the east with such appalling promptness, that, before he could make the slightest move to save himself, he had disappeared — Sunday clothes, pomade, and all — in a blinding cloud of ashes, out of which immediately emerged the most extraordinary wheezing, sneezing, and coughing ever heard in that neighborhood. One sieveful of coal-ashes, with the operator dressed for church, has been known to change the wind to thirty-two points of the compass.

A COTTON FOE.

ONE of the most annoying complaints in the range of medical knowledge is a cold in the head. But you would not think so. No newspaper which publishes intricate recipes for complicated diseases tells, even in the most vague way, how to cure a cold in the head. No doctor in regular practice pretends to know any thing about it. It is the wandering Jew of ailments. It invades every household with impunity, and snaps its feverish finger in the very face of medical science; and medical science promptly dodges, and is glad it can. The man with a cold in his head is a mournful fabric to contemplate. He is ostracized from company. He is barred out from the family circle. He loses his interest in every thing but a stove and

a handkerchief ; and, were he called upon to give an expression, it would be found that his idea of heaven was a place where stove-founderies and cotton-mills were about equally divided. His eyes are watery; his skin is drawn tight to his flesh; his nose is swollen, of a fiery red, and sorer than a strange dog. What he mostly fears is the draught; but, in spite of his most active endeavors, he is sure to get into it; and he is hardly able to conceal his surprise at the pressure of business the family is subjected to, which keeps the door open about two-thirds of the time, and establishes an almost uninterrupted current of air about his legs. Screwed up back of the stove, with his nose like a beacon shining above it, he patiently holds his handkerchief to the blaze, and finally slips into a mental calculation as to which will first lose its moisture, — his cotton, or his blood. There he sits all day, with the handkerchief as a flag of truce tendered by the fire in his head to the fire in the stove; and at night he goes scudding through a cold hall, sneezing at every leap. Long after every one else is asleep, he starts up with a terrific sneeze, and finds that his feet are sticking out below the quilts, and that the handkerchief, which he meant to have carefully located for just this emergency, is nowhere to be found.

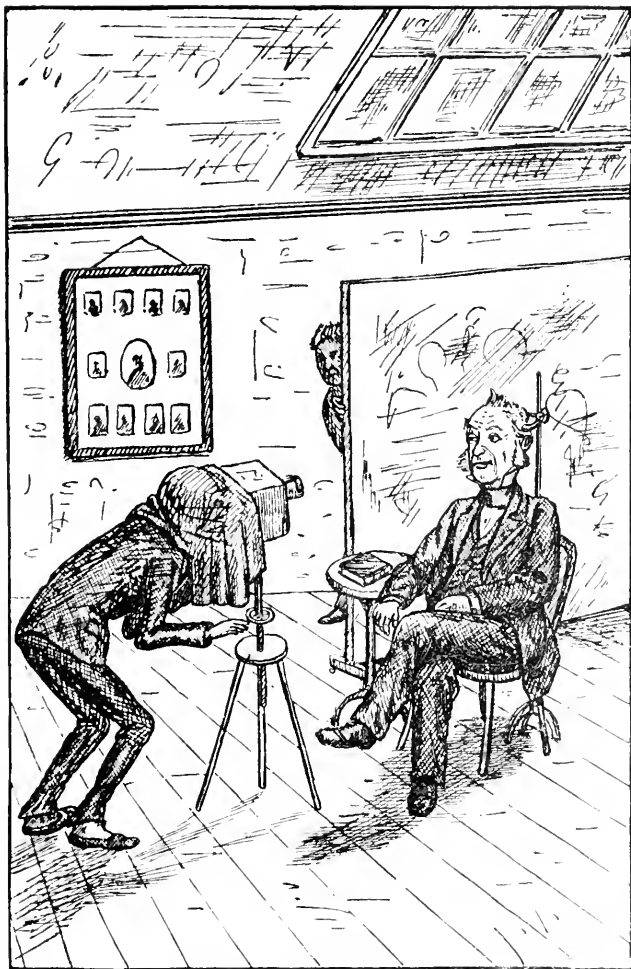
NOW AND THEN.

You know her. She lives on your street. Her features are either pinched, or full and frowzy. Her dress is wet, ill-fitting, and of no particular pattern; her slippers are broken down; her hair is uncombed; her voice is either shrill or coarse. You have seen her stand out in the back-yard, and put a bare arm up to her eyes, and under it peer out to the fence or barn, where a man, in an ill-fitting coat, is searching for something; and have heard her shout, "John! can't George bring me some water?" And you have heard him cry back, "If he don't get that water, I will take every inch of flesh from his bones." And, when you have looked at her again, does it seem possible that those angry eyes have drooped in maidenly reserve, or raised in coquettish light to the face of the man in the ill-fitting coat? Can you, by any possible wrench of the imagination, conceive of his tenderly passing peppermints to her? of his taking that hand in his, and bashfully squeezing it? But it was so. Many a "God bless you" has been uttered above that bare head, many a kiss pressed on that uncombed hair. The tightly-compressed lips have lovingly framed tender invitations to him to take another bite of cake and pickle. The hands that are now parboiled and blistered, and marked with scars from the bread-knife, and scratches

from the last setting-hen, were once twined lovingly about his neck ; and the nose, which is now peaked and red, and looks as if it would stand on its hind-legs and scream with rage, once followed the figures of his new vest-pattern, or bore heavily against his jugular vein. As little probable as this seems to you, it seems less to her. She has forgotten it : she won't hear it talked of by others : she cannot bear to see it acted by others. Two lovers are to her a "passel of fools." And—but George is rubbing his head ; and we turn aside while our heroine re-adjusts her slipper.

A PECULIAR TORTURE.

HAVING a photograph taken is one of the great events in a man's life. The chief desire is to look the very best ; and on the success of the picture hinges, in many cases, the most important epoch in life. To work up a proper appearance time enough is used, which, if devoted to catching fleas for their phosphorus, would cancel the entire national debt, and establish a New-York daily paper. When you have completed your toilet, you go to the gallery, and force yourself into a nonchalance of expression that is too absurd for any thing. Then you take the chair, spread your legs gracefully, appropriate a calm and indifferent look, and



A PECULIAR TORTURE. — Page 224.

commence to perspire. An attenuated man with a pale face, long hair, and a soiled nose, now comes out of a cavern and adjusts the camera. Then he gets back of you, and tells you to sit back as far as you can in the chair, and that it has been a remarkably backward spring. After getting you back till your spine interferes with the chair itself, he shoves your head into a pair of ice-tongs, and dashes at the camera again. Here, with a piece of discolored velvet over his head, he bombards you in this manner: "Your chin out a little, please." The chin is protruded. "That's nicely: now a little more." The chin advances again; and the pomade commences to melt, and start for freedom. Then he comes back to you, and slaps one of your hands on your leg in such a position as to give you the appearance of trying to lift it over your head. The other is turned under itself, and has become so sweaty, that you begin to fear that it will stick there permanently. A new stream of pomade finds its way out, and starts downward. Then he shakes your head in the tongs till it settles right, and says it looks like rain, and puts your chin out again, and punches out your chest, and says he doesn't know what the poor are to do next winter, unless there is a radical change in affairs; and then takes the top of your head in one hand, and your chin in the other, and gives your neck a wrench that would earn any other

man a prominent position in a new hospital. Then he runs his hand through your hair, and scratches your scalp, and steps back to the camera and the injured velvet for another look. By this time, new sweat and pomade have started out. The whites of your eyes show unpleasantly; and your whole body feels as if it had been visited by an enormous cramp, and another and much bigger one was momentarily expected. Then he points at something for you to look at; tells you to look cheerful and composed; and snatches away the velvet, and pulls out his watch. When he gets tired, and you feel as if there was but very little left in this world to live for, he restores the velvet, says it is an unfavorable day for a picture, but he hopes for the best, and immediately disappears in his den. Then you get up and stretch yourself, slap on your hat, and immediately sneak home, feeling mean, humbled, and altogether too wretched for description. The first friend who sees the picture says he can see enough resemblance to make certain that it is you; but you have *tried* to look too formal to be natural and graceful.

AN ABUSED BOY.

You can always tell a boy whose mother cuts his hair. Not because the edges of it look as if it

had been chewed off by an absent-minded horse ; but you tell it by the way he stops on the street and wriggles his shoulders. When a fond mother has to cut her boy's hair, she is careful to guard against any annoyance and muss by laying a sheet on the carpet. It has never yet occurred to her to sit him over a bare floor, and put the sheet around his neck. Then she draws the front hair over his eyes, and leaves it there while she cuts that which is at the back. The hair which lies over his eyes appears to be surcharged with electric needles, and that which is silently dropping down under his shirt-band appears to be on fire. She has unconsciously continued to push his head forward until his nose presses his breast, and is too busily engaged to notice the snuffling sound that is becoming alarmingly frequent. In the mean time, he is seized with an irresistible desire to blow his nose, but recollects that his handkerchief is in the other room. Then a fly lights on his nose, and does it so unexpectedly, that he involuntarily dodges, and catches the points of the shears in his left ear. At this he commences to cry, and wish he was a man. But his mother doesn't notice him. She merely hits him on the other ear to inspire him with confidence, and goes on with the work. When she is through, she holds his jacket-collar back from his neck, and with her mouth blows the short bits of hair from the top of

his head down his back. He calls her attention to this fact ; but she looks for a new place on his head, and hits him there, and asks him why he didn't use his handkerchief. Then he takes his awfully disfigured head to the mirror, and looks at it, and, young as he is, shudders as he thinks of what the boys on the street will say.

THE NEW-ENGLAND FESTIVAL.

THERE is no day so dear to New England as Thanksgiving. It is the event of the year in the home-circle. On that day the family is united, if possible to come together. The married son with his wife and children are there ; the married daughter with her husband and children are there too ; and the respective grandchildren make it hot for the proud and happy grand-parents, and very nearly eat them out of house and home, as it were. The unmarried daughter comes home from school, bringing a companion with her ; and the nephews and nieces are astonished at the magnitude of the bustles and the number of hair-pins these two bring with them. But the chief object in the home-circle to the old folks is the unmarried son, the son of their declining years, — the boy-clerk in New York. He comes home to the old roof-tree young, fresh, and hopeful. He has not yet devel-

oped ; and all the hopes of his parents are centred, founded as a rock, upon his future. He arrives the evening before, takes a hearty supper, and goes out to look up a billiard-room. Thanksgiving Day, to be natural, should come and go with a sunless, leaden sky. The family, having retired late, rise late. Not much breakfast is eaten in a New-England home. The meeting of those long separated, the feeling of reverence and gratitude peculiar to the day's observance, the haste to get to church, and the fact that a dinner calculated to tax every faculty of the stomach will soon be served, tend to make the breakfast a hasty and imperfect meal. That dinner is a spectacle. The room is enlivened by suitable decorations. The table is set out with the best plate and ware. The cooking is simply splendid. The variety of food is almost unlimited. Every chair is occupied. Every heart shows its gladness in the beaming face and bright eye. Home again ! — home with the self-sacrificing and generous father, — home with the dear mother's cooking steaming deliciously in every nostril. Heaven bless her ! What an awful mockery Thanksgiving dinner would be without her ! How her eyes shine as she looks from the well-appointed board to the enjoying ones surrounding it ! — bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh. What fun there is at that table ! How everybody praises the cooking ! and how greasy and shiny are the chubby

faces of the grand-children! They do not understand fully the significance of the feast; but they are happy in the midst of its vapors and odors, and intend to have the wish-bone, if they have to smash an own brother or sister flat with the earth. Ah, happy father! years have come and gone since this home was founded. And how it has grown! There is moisture in his eye, and a tremor to his lip, as he looks over the glad faces about him to see — who of that band so dear to him may be out of gravy or “stuffin’.” Ah! it seems to us that we could knock the stuffing out of any man who could look with an evil eye upon such a scene.

But the dinner draws to a close, precious as its associations are; and each guest, with several pounds of food in his or her stomach, held down by a quarter of mince-pie, withdraws from the table, and carefully fondles his or her stomach surreptitiously and uneasily. The afternoon wanes apace. The unmarried daughter shows her married sisters how to do up their back-hair in the latest style, and tells of the number of pieces of underclothing it is now necessary to have, with other information too subtle for the masculine comprehension. The men-folks are off about town, looking at the improvements, and enjoying memories of the past and the gripes all to themselves.

And then comes the night, and with its deepening shadows the re-united family are beneath the

old roof-tree. The day is spent ; and the morrow will see them speeding on their different ways, — that morrow, which comes whether we will or not, when every one returns to his own, leaving behind him the dear old home and a warmed-up turkey. To-morrow the family must dissolve into its respective fractions ; but they are together now, and no dread of the morrow shall mar the silent joy. And the night has come. It has been a day of pleasure, a day of rejoicing, a day of glad memories, a day of praise, a day of thanksgiving ; and as night broods over the home, and one after another the dear ones awake, and scream for the camphor, and chew nervously at bits of sweet-flag, they all realize the wonderful significance of the day. Heaven be merciful to the home that has no Thanksgiving, no glad memories, no camphor, no sweet-flag !

SHE GOT THAT CHICKEN HERSELF.

It is just as necessary to have poultry for a Thanksgiving dinner as it is to have light. A Danbury couple named Brigham were going to have poultry for their dinner. Mr. Brigham said to his wife the day before the event, —

“ I saw some splendid chickens in front of Merrill’s store to-day ; and I guess I’ll get one of them this afternoon for to-morrow.”

"I am going to tend to that myself," said Mrs. Brigham quickly.

"But I can get it just as well: I'm going right by there."

"I *don't* want you to get it," she asserted. "When I eat chicken, I want something I can put my teeth in." And a hard look came into her face.

He colored up at once.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Just what I say," she explained, setting her teeth together.

"Do you mean to say I don't know how to pick out a chicken?" he angrily demanded.

"I do."

"Well, I can just tell you, Mary Ann Brigham, that I know more about chickens in one minute than you could ever find out in a lifetime; and, furthermore, I am going to buy that chicken, if one is bought at all in this house." And he struck the table with his fist.

"And I tell you, John Joyce Brigham," she cried, "that you don't know any more how to pick out a good chicken than an unweaned mud-turtle; and, if you bring a chicken in this house, it will go out again quicker'n it come in; and you can put that in your pipe an' smoke it as soon as you want to."

"Whose house is this, I want to know?" he fiercely demanded.

She frankly replied at once, —

“I suppose it belongs to a flat-head idiot with a wart on his nose. But a woman who knows a spring chicken from a hump-back camel is running the establishment ; and, as long as she does, he can't bring no patent-leather hens here to be cooked.”

“You'll see what I'll do!” he yelled ; and he pulled his coat on, and jammed his cap on his head, with the forepiece over his left ear.

“You bring a chicken here if you think best, *Mister* Brigham,” she replied.

“You see if I don't !” he growled, as he passed out, and slammed the door behind him.

That evening there was a nice, fine chicken in the pantry : but he didn't bring it. Perhaps he forgot to get his.

Dinner came the next day. Mr. Brigham took his seat at the table as usual ; but it was evident that he intended mischief. Mrs. Brigham filled a plate with chicken, mashed potatoes, and boiled onions. It was a tempting dish, emitting a delicious aroma. She passed it to Mr. Brigham. He did not look towards it.

“Brigham,” said she, “here's your plate.”

“I don't want any chicken,” he said, looking nervously around the room.

“Are you going to eat that chicken ?” she demanded in a voice of low intensity.

“No, I ain't. Wooh ! ouch ! ooh !”

She had sprung to her feet in a flash, reached over the table, caught him by the hair, and had his face burrowing in the dish of hot onions. It was done so quick, that he had no time to save himself, and barely time to give utterance to the agonizing exclamations which followed upon his declaration.

"Are you going to eat that chicken?" she hoarsely demanded.

"Lemme up!" he screamed.

She raised his head from the dish, and jammed it on the table.

"John Joyce Brigham," she hissed between her set teeth, "this is a day set apart by the nation for thanksgiving and praise. I got that chicken to celebrate this day, and I ain't going to have my gratitude and devotion upset by such a runt as you are. Now I want to know if you are going to eat that chicken like a Christian, or if you are going to cut up like a rantankerous heathen. Answer me at once, or I'll jam your old skull into a jelly."

"I — I'll eat it!" he moaned.

Then she let him up, and he took his plate; and one Thanksgiving meal, at least, passed off harmoniously.

THE SQUIGGSES ARE GRATEFUL.

THANKSGIVING is strictly a New-England day. Its religious element makes it harmonious with

the well-known sentiment of New England. It is a day for feasting, and giving thanks unto God for his care and love during the year ; and was observed by the Squiggsses, a representative family, in an eminently characteristic manner. They had chicken for dinner. Mr. Squiggs won the chicken the night before at a raffle. The day dawned auspiciously. The young Squiggsses, three in number, after a late breakfast, went out to slide on the ice. Mr. Squiggs proceeded to fix up a length in the back-fence, which had needed repair for several weeks. Mrs. Squiggs busied herself with the affairs of the house, in the intricacies of which she was soon completely submerged. When the church-bells pealed forth their glad notes, calling a grateful people to the temple of a merciful God to worship him for his goodness, Mr. Squiggs was trying to saw a barrel in two for a chicken-coop, and was carrying on like a corsair because of the eccentricity of the saw ; and Mrs. Squiggs was disembowelling the chicken. At half-past twelve, when the worshippers were coming from church, Mr. Squiggs was beating the soot out of a length of stove-pipe ; and Mrs. Squiggs was sweeping out the parlor, or "front-room" as the Squiggsses called it. The three little Squiggsses, with appetites like a shark, had returned from the sliding on the ice, being driven therefrom by hunger, and were huddled about the kitchen-fire, with a dreadful heart-sick look in their

faces, produced by the dinner-hour, when there is no visible prospect of a dinner at hand. The kitchen was all confusion ; the "front-room " was cold, and floating with dust, in which Mrs. Squiggs appeared like a being of mythology, with red arms, and a towel wrapped about her head ; the air outside was cold and cheerless in the contemplation of an empty stomach ; and the blows on the stove-pipe sounded most dismally. About three o'clock P.M., the dinner was served. The little Squiggsses, having been cuffed alongside the head by their impatient father, and walked over several times by the hurrying mother, were in an active condition for an onslaught on the meal, and fell to work in a most vehement manner. The father, who had omitted to ask God to bless the food, or to thank him for his mercies, said they acted like hogs. This was a harsh criticism ; but it had no visible effect on their enthusiasm. When the meal was over, the three boys slid out for the pond, — their faces shining with the friction of the feast, — the father went out to hunt up some bits of board for a coal-bin, and the mother went to work to "clear up." Late in the afternoon the boys returned, having succeeded in swapping off a three-wheeled wagon for a quart of walnuts. In the evening the father went down to the saloon and lost seventy-five cents at raffling, and about ten o'clock returned. The boys, having had a good time, were lying on the

floor close to the stove, asleep ; and the mother was busy letting in a square of dark cloth into the rotunda of a pair of light pants. With the memory of his losses still upon him, the father intimated to the boys, with his boot-toes, that it was time to retire, which they did. Then he pulled off his boots, and moved around in his stocking-feet, occasionally pausing to make some vivid observation on nut-shells, preceded by that simple but fervent expression, —

“ Ouch ! ”

Shortly after, the twain retired ; and thus closed a day set apart for rejoicing and thankfulness before God.

MR. COBLEIGH LOOKS AFTER THE BREAD.

MRS. COBLEIGH had to run over to a neighbor's to see about pickling some green tomatoes. She had a loaf of bread in the oven ; and she told Cobleigh to take care of it. Mr. Cobleigh was home with a boil on his knee. She said, “ It won't be any trouble to you. In about fifteen minutes, it will be done at this end ; and then you turn it around so that the other can bake. I'll be back in time to take it out.”

Then she threw a shawl over her head, and started. About five minutes after she was gone, one of the neighbors came in to show Mr. Cob-

leigh a double-barrelled gun which he had just bought. After Mr. Cobleigh had carefully examined it, and held it up, and aimed at imaginary game with it, he was forcibly reminded of a gun which his father owned when Cobleigh was a boy, and when the family were living in Sandersville. There were a number of astonishing incidents connected with this remarkable fowling-piece, which Cobleigh proceeded to relate in a vivid and captivating manner. Suddenly the neighbor snuffed up his nose, and hastily observed,—

“I say, what’s the matter here? Any thing afire?”

Cobleigh glanced at the stove, and then at the clock, while his face became pallid.

“By Jove!” he ejaculated, “my wife told me to look at that bread in fifteen minutes; and she’s been gone over a half-hour. That’s what’s burning.” And Cobleigh, with an expression of genuine distress, essayed to rise; but the neighbor promptly came to his relief.

“Let me tend to it; you can’t get around easily,” he said.

He opened the oven-door, and a puff of smoke came out.

“It’s a goner, I’m afraid,” he said, dropping on his knees.

It appeared to be so. Two-thirds of the loaf was as black as the ace of spades; and there were

little flakes of live coal scattered over its surface. With that impulsive, trusting nature peculiar to a man, the sympathetic neighbor thrust his hand into the oven, and laid hold of that blazing, baking tin without the faintest hesitation. Then he drew out his hand, with the awfulest howl ever heard on that street, and —

Poor Mr. Cobleigh! In his anxiety for the bread, and sympathy for his wife, he had approached to the rear of his friend, and was looking over his shoulder at the ruin, when the astonished arm was swung back; and the owner thereof instantly lost sight of his own misery in the terrific yell which ascended just behind him. The arm struck an obstacle; and the unfortunate Mr. Cobleigh rolled over on the floor, screaming with all his might, —

“You’ve busted it! O heavens! you’ve busted it!”

It was an anguish no mortal words could allay. The neighbor saw this at a glance: so he picked up his gun, and silently scudded home. A moment later, Mrs. Cobleigh came in; and the instant she opened the door, Mr. Cobleigh ceased his moans, scrambled to his feet, and stalked majestically to their bedroom, where he locked the door, and put the bureau against it. Three minutes later, Mrs. Cobleigh knocked at the door for admittance; but of course it was not opened.

Then she put her mouth to the keyhole, and shouted, —

"I wouldn't make a fool of myself, if I was you, John Cobleigh. *It is a great pity I can't be gone out of this house A SINGLE MINUTE, but that the whole place has got to be turned upside down, and things go to ruin.*"

She actually said that.

THE quilting-season is upon us. The frames are up stairs in the garret, with the nails conspicuously standing out in them. The man of the house brings them down. It takes about an hour to bring down a set of quilting-frames in a proper manner. In the first place, they have to be got out from under five barrels, two trunks, and an assortment of boxes; and it's wonderful the quality of tenacity one nail possesses when it gets caught under some object you cannot see. The frames catch against the chimney, or entangle with the rafters; while there is never any unity between them in descending a narrow stairway. No one really knows how a man gets down stairs with a set of quilting-frames; but anybody not irredeemably deaf knows that it is being done, if on the same street with the performance. Then the frame is bolstered up on chairs in the best room, and the long arms stick out, and catch the unwary husband in his clothes, and, in turn, are dropped to the floor just as the weary wife is about to take a

stitch ; and the remarks she makes as the quilt suddenly collapses are calculated to instantaneously transform his scalp into a parade-ground. Four pounds of cotton-batting are required on this occasion : three and a half pounds go into the quilt, and the other half-pound he carries around with him on his clothes.

THE dining-room stove is not up yet, of course. It is a little too early, and the cleaning is not yet done : besides, the heat from the kitchen-fire is a great help, as you will perceive while turning up the sleeves to your overcoat, so as not to get them in the breakfast coffee.

HOUSE-CLEANING.

A WOMAN feels as if she has missed her destiny in some way if she has not arranged the cleaning-season so as to take in one wet, miserable Sunday.

THERE is not a woman living who has the honesty to admit she likes to clean house. She realizes just how despicable it is, just how much misery it inflicts on those about her. That is the reason she dare not come out openly before the world, and boldly confess what is really a fact.

No stove is to be put up until the house is cleaned : it is immaterial what the weather is. And, in the week the rejuvenating is going on, a man has more misery thrust upon him, and driven into him, and filtered through him, than it would seem possible for one human being to hold.

WHAT strikes a man as being almost supernaturally remarkable is the fact that house-cleaning and the line-storm invariably strike the earth at one and the same time. He can't very well protest against the heavens ; and he well knows there is no earthly use of arguing the matter with his wife.

It has been satisfactorily demonstrated, that, when a man steps on a bar of soap which has been left on the top step, it will start down stairs with him, and, though having much the best start, will yet be overtaken and passed by him before it gets half way down. This sounds almost like an Eastern allegory ; but every married man knows it is true.

THERE is a fire in the kitchen,—a good fire. If the man of the house feels cold, why don't he go in there ? It is a good place, is the kitchen. Every fly in the family is in there to receive him, and sing to him, and prance around with him. The table is loaded with fly-specked dishes ; and there is a four-

gallon pail of boiling water on the stove, and mop-cloths and white-wash pails and tinware on the floor, with a poorly discriminating girl with red arms diving to and fro with a pan of hot water in her hands. It *is* a little singular that the half-frozen and wholly crazed man does not take to the kitchen for comfort.

SHAKING a carpet is a feature of house-cleaning which thoroughly enlists the attention of the man of the house. It is done after dinner. The reason the woman selects this time is because he is dressed, and has to go back to business again without a chance to change his clothes. He carries the carpet out doors. It is not rolled up; it is in a wad shape: and he gathers it up in his arms, and starts for the door, with one end of the carpet dragging between his feet. He scorns to stop and roll it up. He has got his arms full. It presses into his bosom, and leaves rifts of sand and grit on his shirt-front; it bulges into his face, hot and dusty, and fills his mouth and nose and eyes. Then the long end gets under one foot as he is going down the back-stoop, and the other foot mounts up the breadth; and he stumbles, but catches himself, and prevents falling to the ground on his face by deliberately yet blindly jumping off the stoop. He finally gets the carpet on the line. It is very warm. There is a breeze from the west. He

steps on the west side of the carpet, and hits it a lick with a stick : instantly the wind turns sharp around to the east, and he is engulfed in dust. He darts around to the east side, and hits it another lick : the wind veers around to the west simultaneously ; and he is plunged into a sneezing-fit, which seriously threatens to dislocate his neck. Then he pauses, and looks around uneasily. He sees that a carpet has the same effect on the wind as a sieveful of coal-ashes, and he doesn't understand it. He gets a clothes-pole, and stands around at the north end, and hits the carpet a terrible rap : the wind promptly sails around to the south, and catches him full in the face with a pint of dust before the pole has fairly left the carpet. He doesn't stop to reason now : he would be a jackass if he did. He grasps the pole with all his might, and madly smashes it against the carpet, and dances around the line, and coughs, and sneezes, and swears. After that, it is pulled down ; and the hired girl, with the strength of an ox, takes hold of an end with him, and they proceed to shake it. His hands are in blisters across the palms ; and his fingers, aching with the grasp on the pole, can seem to find no hold on the woof and warp. At every other shake they glide off, starting the nails, and causing his arms to tingle clear to the elbows ; and, every time he picks up that carpet, he does it with renewed energy and a weaker

backbone. The most we can hope for a man in this position is, that he is not a deacon of a church, and the hired girl a member of it.

No words can satisfactorily paint the bleakness, the dreariness, the dejection, the awful gloom, of a house being cleaned. The windows are out; the carpets are up; and the dining-room table is full of dishes. Every other chair contains either a basin of water or a wet cloth or brush. The air is permeated with soap and wet and mould and new white-wash. All the furniture is piled promiscuously in the centre of the rooms, excepting what is left in a heap in the hall. In front of the bed-room closet-door is a rocking-chair full of bed-clothes; and, when the man wants to get there after an old coat, he has to climb and shove to get the door open, and, after once in, he has to push like a battering-ram to get out again. The pictures are arranged on the floor, leaning against the walls in a way to catch the unwary boot-heel and unthinking bed-post. There is a saucer of rusty tacks on the *tête-à-tête*, and a besmeared bottle of balsam on the what-not, and an empty ink-bottle in the card-basket; while the marble top centre-table contains an album, a piece of dried soap, an elegant lithograph, one tack-hammer, a half-can of potash, a beautiful scriptural motto on cardboard, and ninety-seven dead flies. It is this general upsettedness, this

awful conglomeration, this dreadful uncertainty, which gives the home-circle its glow of terror to a man. This is what makes him move around as little as possible in the house, and causes him every other moment to smite his head, and gives him the vacant expression always inseparable with the face of a man whose wife is cleaning house. And she — is she in pain? She has got on a torn dress, hitched up at one side sufficiently to reveal an unbuttoned shoe; there are flakes of white-wash in her hair and on her chin; her dress is wet; her fingers are parboiled, and her thumb has been split with a hammer: but her eye is as clear and bright as that of a major-general on field-day. She picks up a handful of skirts, and skims through the apartments, seeing five hundred things which should be done at once, and trying to do them; and every time she comes in reach of the dresser she snatches a look into the glass, and shoves a fresh hair-pin into her dilapidated coil. And thus planted in the *débris*, like a queen on her throne, she unblushingly asserts that "It's an awful job;" "Every thing is in wretched shape;" "I'll be so glad when this is over!" "It does seem as if my back will snap in two;" "I'm a good mind to say I'll never clean house again as long as I live." And then her mind unconsciously soars heavenward, and she wonders if there will be a house-cleaning season there, and, if not, how a

heaven can be made of it. It is this speculation which gives her that dreamy expression when she is cutting your bread with the soap-knife.

JUST such weather as this instils new life and animation into a man, and is apt to make him frolicsome. It stimulates him to racing, jumping up and down, clapping his hands, and feeling good generally. It so stimulated one of our merchants on Friday evening, and led him to invite his wife to catch him before he got round to the back-stoop. He started on a smart run ; and she bore down after him at a creditable speed. He tore around the corner very much in earnest, and, stepping on a piece of ice, swung from his foothold, and went careening across ten feet of frozen ground, and brought up with considerable force against a pear-tree, — a new variety, we believe. It was a genial spectacle to see the fond wife pounce on him, and hear her gleeful shouts of victory as he struggled madly to his feet, and besought her “not to make a darn fool of herself.”



WINTER IN DANBURY.



WINTER IN DANBURY.

THE LITTLE MIGGSES' CHRISTMAS.

THIS is rather late for a Christmas story ; which is one reason why we write it. The names are fictitious, of course. However much we may desire to cut and slash our fellow-men, and bruise their hearts, and wrench their feelings, we succeed in overcoming it now, because of this glad holiday week ; and with the influence of peace on earth, and good-will toward men, we call him Miggs, and call *them* Miggs. So their name is Miggs, and they live on Nelson Street.

Nelson Street ! What a world of pictures the very name calls up to us ! We close our eyes, and the quaint avenue appears before us. We see two long lines of houses, in all conceivable colors for houses, with all kinds of fences in front of them. And from the doors of these houses come broken-legged men, and bandaged men, and bad men ; and from the windows peer women, — comical women, serious women, grotesque women, homely

women, women with brooms, and women with herbs, and women with advice; but all of them, however they may differ in appearance, united in screaming after the men. And down the street fly hens, followed by coal clinkers; and dogs dragging tin ware after them; and half-crazed cows swinging both hind-legs in the air (as cows do when excited); and cats with backs like the rainbow, spitting and yowling, and distressing themselves.

The house of the Miggses is a brown building, void of shutters or blinds. It is one of several brown buildings, equally bereft, on that street. It is protected at the front with a slat fence, where the slats are not gone; and the yard at the front and sides is strewn with a little of such refuse matter as is customary to a tenement-yard. One would think the Miggses had taken a coal-mine for debt, from the many bits of wood scattered over the premises, and fast losing their individuality in the mud.

The Miggses occupied the first floor, which gave them a front-room (which was also a sitting and dining room, and kitchen), two bed-rooms, and a pantry. The front-room was the family room. Here were a greasy stove and mantle ornaments, a dining-table, a red chest, several odd chairs which looked as if time could never quite obliterate their animosity toward each other, a chromo of angels, and a startling novelty in the shape of a steel

engraving of the Declaration of Independence. There were other things of minor importance in the room ; but these we have enumerated strike the observer most prominently. It is now five o'clock the evening before Christmas. Mrs. Miggs, sitting in a rocker, and looking absently at her foot is holding the youngest Miggs, whose head is buried in her bosom. The two boy Miggs, hand in hand, are on the street, staring with all their might at the hurrying people, and anon pausing before a well-filled and brightly-lighted window, and devouring the sight. When we find them, they are in front of the leading toy and confectionery store. Their hands do not now hold each, other, but are pressed on their breasts, as if they would keep down a cry that could not otherwise be suppressed. They were common enough children. Robbie, the elder, a boy of eight years, had a white face, with big watery blue eyes. Jakey, the younger, aged seven, had a white face, with big watery blue eyes. Both of them had light, tawny hair. Here all semblance ceased.

Robbie wore a soft wool hat with a broken brim. Jakey's head was surmounted with a soldier's cap, with a formidable forepiece ; and, because of the prominence of this ornament, Jakey was obliged to crowd the cap down on the back of his head, or suffer a complete eclipse. Robbie wore a gray jacket with black patches ; and was further attired

with a dingy yellow comforter coiled about his neck like an overfed boa-constrictor, and a pair of his mother's cast-off gaiters securely fastened to his feet. Jakey's jacket was a rusty plaid without any patches, but contemplating them; and his pants — very little pants they were in the legs, but quite obese in the seat — were gray, and had been ingeniously darned at the knees with black thread. Jakey's little feet were incased in low shoes with copper tips, — the only jewelry the child wore, — and about his neck was a flaming red comforter, whose many folds threatened to smother him.

The store-window was very brilliant. There were candies of every conceivable design, stored in vases, piled on plates, and heaped in pyramids. There were suspended candy canes, and dangling baskets of sugar fruit, and festoons of cornucopias. And while they stood there, and stared through the window, and lost their breath and caught it, and then lost it again, there was a sudden invasion of shouts and steps; and a troop of wild boys, hooting and struggling, crowded up to the window, and fell to work establishing their claims by such brief and hurried notices as, "I dubs this pile!" "I dubs the cornucopias!" "I dubs the gum-drops!" &c. One of the gaiters was very rudely stepped upon; and the military cap was knocked down in front to such a degree, that the stiff forepiece threatened to cut off the copper toes. The two Miggses imme-

diately kicked themselves free of the crowd, and stopped on the outskirts to look at the struggling mass. Then bells and whistles sounded the hour of six; and the two children clasped hands once more, and hurried home, one of them smarting from the pressure on his foot, and the other from the vulgar familiarity which had been taken with his cap. Supper was ready on their arrival; but they had to wait until the coming of their father. The room had changed wonderfully under the influence of the lamp and the singing kettle. The two little boys, after taking the precaution to make a careful survey of the table, unwrapped themselves from their superfluous clothing, which they deposited on the floor, and, until the arrival of their father, treated their mother to snatches of information of what they had seen, and contradicted each other, and exchanged glances of mystery, and wondered what they were going to get for Christmas. The whole of which they interspersed with such observations as, "Oh, my!" "I guess not!" "Oh, no!" and the like, being calculated to express, although in a very feeble manner, the great wonders they had seen, and the great gratification they now experienced in reviewing them. On the arrival of senior Miggs a great uproar ensued, coming mainly from the two junior Miggsses; although the very diminutive Miggs in arms gave substantial aid by partly swallowing a button, and recovering it again.

The two Miggs boys, who had been up street for the express although concealed purpose of catching a glimpse of Santa Claus, now fell to bombarding their father about him, and were gratified to learn that he had seen him, and, furthermore, had been able, at an infinite cost of effort, to glean the gratifying information that he *was* coming, and that (which was much more to the point) he had things in his bag for Robbie and Jakey.

"And Georgy?" shouted Robbie, indicating that party by pinching his fat nose.

"And Georgy too," said Mr. Miggs, nodding to the baby.

"Good!" shrieked Robbie.

"Ki yi!" responded Jakey.

And the two little boys, having now finished their supper, got down back of the stove, and speedily fell into an animated discussion as to what they would have, and as to what they should do with it, and which would have the most, and which would keep it the longest; and pretty soon they suddenly appeared to view with their hands in each other's hair, and immediately rolled under the table in a desperate endeavor to kick off each other's legs.

The fond but somewhat astonished father at once swooped down on them, and, by helping himself to their hair, soon imparted to them something of his own feelings of peace and good-will, and for

the next twenty minutes kept himself between them, and thus secured quiet.

With a view to conforming themselves to this sudden and rather unexpected change, the young men slyly shook their fists at each other, and, when their father was very busily engaged in his conversation, found time to whisper under his chair the plans they entertained for each other's future. By degrees, they finally worked together again; but forgetting their past difficulty in the shadowing of the holiday, and by the close approach of that hour when the tread of many feet would sound on the roof, they nestled closely together by the side of the stove, and kept their large watery eyes on their father.

Thus they sat until both parents grew nervous, and consulted the clock as frequently as if it were an oracle, and the only oracle within sixty miles. Sundry observations on the remarkable safety of going to bed early had no other effect upon the two little Miggsses than to make their eyes snap. Finally it was suggested, as something entirely original, that Santa Claus would never think of putting things in the stockings of boys who did not go to bed at nine o'clock. There was a decided evidence of uneasiness back of the stove. "Santa Claus," Mr. Miggs went on to explain to Mrs. Miggs, "knew a good boy when he saw him; and he knew the very first and last thing a good boy

would persist in doing would be in going to bed early." (The uneasiness back of the stove visibly increased.) "However," continued Mr. Miggs, still addressing himself to Mrs. Miggs, "there *are* boys who think they are smart, and will find out what Santa Claus is going to put in their stockings before he has taken it out of his bag; but boys like that are not so keen as they think, which they find to their cost when morning comes, and there is nothing whatever in their stockings." Mr. Miggs was very much depressed by the disappointment of the smart boys, and had all he could do to restrain a tear; but the sudden movement of the two little Miggses to bed diverted his mind.

Once in bed, they lay conversing in whispers, and staring apprehensively at the ray of light coming through the door. The all-absorbing topic of their thoughts being the weird Dutchman and his countless treasures, they compared notes of their conception of his character, and, having exhausted the fertility of their brain in giving him shape and qualities, finally vowed to stay awake, and verify their own predictions with their own eyes. And after that they fell asleep.

And, while they slept, the wonderful Santa Claus took down the little patched stockings, and put candies in them, and molasses cookies, and jumping-jacks, and little primers, and peanuts, and sugar kisses, and handled the little stockings as

tenderly as if they were the richest the market afforded, and their contents the grandest the world could contribute. Angels, unless they were the spirits of grocers and clothiers troubled by the memory of bad accounts, must have smiled on this Santa Claus and his gracious work of love.

And, when the first flush of Christmas Day lighted up the world, the little Miggs boys were out of bed, and on the floor of the big room, feeling their way to the mantle with the most affectionate regard for the chairs and stoves in the way.

And when their little fingers closed spasmodically on the stockings, and learned their plumpness by the sense of feeling, the glad shout that went up made the old timbers resound with a thousand echoes. They flew to the bedside of their parents, and filled the ears of those guardians with the horrid din of proud exultation.

Then the lamp was lighted, because there could be no more sleep in that house, and the contents of the stockings were carefully poured out on the table; and at every advent of a package there was another scream by the party producing it, set off by a look of quick apprehension by the party observing it.

Then there was a great time getting their pa and ma to taste the candy, and play the monkey-jacks; and, when they had done this to the satisfaction of all, the little Miggses tore out of the house in

search of the other boys in the neighborhood, to see what they got, and to compare trophies.

Some of the boys thus sought had, we regret to say, a better variety and superior toys to what the Miggses got ; but then there were other boys who fared worse, and so the matter was balanced.

But there is a sort of feeling, bred from the occasion itself, we think, which pervades the atmosphere, mellowing the hearts of all children, and making them, unless they are brothers, perfectly contented with what they have received, as compared with what others, more favored, have received.

The little Miggses did not see any thing among the neighbors that made their possessions appear any the less comforting. They chewed their candy, and cracked their peanuts, and jumped their jacks, and thumbed their primers, in a mild insanity. And, when they were tired of this, they went out into the yard, and slid on some green-and-white ice made by suds. And, when their own eatables were dissolved, they generously turned in of one accord, and helped the baby-brother to eat his.

And when these, too, were gone, and the Christmas-dinner eaten, they wrapped their threadbare garments about their little forms, and stoned the neighboring hens until dark.

A FEMALE CAUCUS.

THEY were going to get up a Lady Washington tea-party for the benefit of their society. It was to come off on the night of the 22d; and, of an afternoon a few days before, several ladies met at the house of one of the number to perfect the arrangements. It was determined to give a grand affair, — something especially designed to transcend the tea-party by a rival organization last year. To this purpose it became necessary to devote the most careful thought to all the details; and this was done. In fact, it would be difficult to find a more conscientious committee in a hamlet the size of Danbury. When all the particulars were arranged, and the various stands and minor offices assigned to the ordinary members of the society, — who were not present, — the important question as to who should take the leading character was brought up. With a view to doing without the delay and feeling of balloting, the president kindly offered to do Lady Washington herself. She said that she felt it was not a favorable selection; but she was willing to take it, so that there need be no discussion or ill-feeling. If she thought she had not placed a sufficiently modest estimate upon her qualifications for the post, she was presently set at rest on that head. Her offer was received with silence.

“What do you think?” she asked. “I’m willing to do it.”

"Lady Washington never weighed two hundred and fifty pounds," ominously hinted a thin lady with very light eyes.

"She had fat enough on her to grease a griddle, which is more'n some folks can claim," retorted the president, with any thing but a dreamy expression to her face. The tall lady's eyes grew a shade darker, and her lips shaped themselves as if they were saying "Hussy!" but it is probable they were not.

"As our two friends are so little likely to agree," observed a lady whose face showed that she was about to metamorphose herself into a barrel of prime oil, and precipitate herself on to the troubled waters, "I would suggest that I take the character."

"Humph!" ejaculated the president.

"Is there any objection to my being Lady Washington?" said the new party, facing abruptly the president, and emptying out the oil, and filling up the barrel immediately with a superior grade of vinegar.

"I don't know of any, if some one will demonstrate that Lady Washington had a wart on her nose," replied the president with unblemished serenity.

"Am I to be insulted?" hotly demanded the proprietor of the wart.

"The truth ought not to be insulting," replied the president.

"I s'pose our president thinks she would be a perfect Lady Washington," ironically suggested a weak-faced woman, who saw her chances for taking the character dejectedly emerge from the small end of the horn.

"I don't know as I would be perfect in that *rôle*," replied the president; "but, as there will be strangers present at the party, I shouldn't want them to think that the nearest approach Danbury could make to the dignity of '76 was a toothless woman down with the jaundice." And the head officer smiled serenely at the ceiling.

"What do you mean, you insinuating thing?" hoarsely demanded the victim of the jaundice.

"Keep your mouth shut until you are spoken to, then," severely advised the president.

"I'm not to be dictated to by a mountain of tallow," hissed the chromatic delegate, flouncing out of the room.

"I think we'd better get another president before we go any farther," said a sharp-faced woman, very much depressed by the outlook for herself.

"It isn't hardly time for you yet," observed the president, with a significant look at the sharp-faced woman. "We have to arrange for Lady Washington and George Washington before we need the *hatchet*."

The sharp-faced lady snatched up her muff without the faintest hesitation, and rushed out doors

to get her breath. She was immediately followed by the proprietor of the wart, the thin lady disastrously connected with a griddle, and the toothless case of jaundice. This left but the president and a little woman who had yet said nothing.

"Has it occurred to you that you would like to be Lady Washington?" asked the president, concentrating both of her eyes on a wen just under the small woman's left ear.

"Oh, no!" gasped the small woman, impulsively covering up the excrescence with her hand.

"Then I guess we'll adjourn *sine die*," said the president; and, pulling on her gloves, she composedly took her departure.

And the tea-party became the fragment of a gloomy memory.

SWEARING OFF.

THE day after New-Year's, Mr. Whiting came home to dinner, and electrified his wife with —

"I have sworn off drinking, Matilda."

"You *have*?" said his wife, hardly believing her senses.

"Yes, sir-ee!" he animatedly replied. "I've sworn off, — sworn off this very day; and that's the last of it, by hokey!"

Mr. Whiting sat down to the table with a self-satisfied air, and rubbed his hands in a self-satisfied way, and briskly continued:—

“I’ve been thinking over this thing all the morning ; and I’ve come to the conclusion that I’ve made a fool of myself just long enough. Why ! the money I spend in liquor would very soon get me a house I’ve figured it up. Take fifty or sixty cents a day, an’ I tell you it counts up mighty fast. It costs me about a hundred and sixty-five dollars a year ; an’ in eight years that would get me a comfortable place, to say nothing of the adornments and comforts generally which such a sum would bring ”

“Are you sure you can stick to it ?” inquired his wife with some anxiety.

“Sure of it ! Gracious ! I guess I am sure of it. I ain’t been figuring this thing for nothing. Oh ! I shall do it I’m like a flint, I am, when I get started. I’ve got a will like a perary-fire : there’s no fighting against it. Yes, sir : I’ve figured this thing up from bottom to top, and from top to bottom ; and I’m bound to do it. I know when I figure ; and I’ve figured this thing right down to a fine pint, you bet !”

Mr. Whiting continued his dinner, his face shining, and his heart warmed with the greatness of his purpose. When he got on his coat, and started for work, he observed to his wife,—

“I’ll get you a pair of vases in a few days, Matilda, an’ a set of furs ; an’ I’m going to have a French clock as big as a cook-stove, an’ a con-

servatory with the biggest smelling flowers in the land. An' I guess I'll get a pianny, and a horse, an' perhaps a couple of dogs, an' I don't know but a cow. I've figured this thing up, an' there's no use talking: money is to be saved. It makes me mad enough to kick my shoulder out of joint when I think what a fool I've been all these years. Why, hang it all! we might 'av' had an ice-house of our own, and been living in a hotel. This is the solemn truth, or I am a tattooed galoot from some archipelago, by hokey!"

And Mr. Whiting glowed all over with the great excitement.

"Dear, *dear* Tom!" cried his delighted wife as she threw her arms about his neck and sobbed aloud.

"Don't cry, Tildy!" he hastily exclaimed, while he vainly strove to keep back the tears from his own eyes. "It's all right, you know," he went on in an assuring voice, and gently stroking her hair. "I've figured it up, an' I'm going to do it. Don't cry, Tildy: it's all right. I've figured it up, an' you can depend on me." And, disengaging her arms, he departed to his work, his heart lighter and gladder than it had been for some years.

"By George!" he said to himself, suddenly pausing, and slapping his leg. "This is what may be called living." And he went on again, looking happier than before.

He came home to tea. There was not that hopeful, buoyant expression in his face that was there at noon. He looked distrustfully about the room as he pulled off his coat.

"Ain't that supper ready yet?" he gruffly inquired.

"It will be in a minute," replied Mrs. Whiting.

He threw his coat on one chair, and his hat in another, and heavily sank into a third. For a moment he sat there contemplating the fire. Then he arose, and wanted to know what in thunder was the matter with that stove: the house was as cold as a barn. Mrs. Whiting looked at him in astonishment. But, if she was amazed now, she was more than dumfounded before bed-time. He said the biscuits were heavy as lead, that the tea was slop, and that the preserves were worse than chopped-up oil-cloth. The room was either too hot or too cold. Every thing belonging to him had been misplaced. He picked up nothing: he snatched it up. He lay down nothing: he threw it down. He growled when he spoke, and he spoke but little. The poor woman was in an agony of apprehension. In all the years of their wedded life she had never seen him act like this. He grew worse as the hours advanced, and finally wound up by emphatically declaring that he "might as well be in a lunatic-asylum, a-fittin' spectacles to pink-eyed taters for his board, as to live in such a house."

Then he went to bed.

At breakfast next morning, Mrs. Whiting quietly observed, —

“Tom, you figured it all out yesterday, didn’t you?”

He made no reply.

“Well, I’ve been figuring too; and I—I think we can get along without the vases, and the piano, and the French clock, and the other things; and as for living in a hotel, and owning an ice-house, I haven’t the faintest desire.”

And they are doing without those things for the present.

A GHASTLY JOY.

THERE being a great plenty of snow, there is an abundance of sleighing, and, consequently, an abundance of misery. There is nothing in which our people so persistently labor to deceive themselves as in the matter of sleighing. The opera is nothing to it. If there is not much snow, everybody is sorry; if there is plenty, everybody is glad. And yet it is safe to say, that not one in twenty who go sleighing enjoy it. We deceive each other; we deceive ourselves. A young man hires a horse and sleigh, and gives his girl a ride. It is a pleasure-trip, without doubt: in fact, it is useless to dispute it. His mother wants him to wear a cap which

can be drawn down over his ears, and to tie a comforter about his neck, and put on two pairs of pants, and a small shawl under his coat, and a pair of mittens over his gloves; but he does not do it. He even feels offended at the suggestion, and becomes a trifle irritable under the advice. She is a good mother; but she is well along in years, and doesn't understand the proprieties of things. He understands them. He is not going after a load of wood: he is going on a pleasure-excursion with one who is very dear to him; and, if he should appear comfortable rather than stylish, he might lose her favor forever. This is a serious reflection. So he dons a silk hat and a pair of light gloves, and trusts the entire protection of his throat to a stand-up shirt-collar. And she—how does she prepare for the ride? She, too, has a mother,—a thoughtful old body, but so far, so very far, behind the age! And this mother takes a hearty interest in the ride. She suggests a quilted hood for her daughter's head, and a pair of warm home-made mitts for her hands, and a wealth of tip-pets for her neck and body. She even persists in these things, and is honestly horrified at what she calls the temerity of going without them. But her daughter is not going to do it. She is not going to appear to him like a mummy. How it *would* look! So she puts on her Sunday bonnet with its bright colors, and some lace around the neck, and

a pair of kids on her hands. And so they start off, leaving the mother half paralyzed with horror on the door-step, with her arms full of comfortable woollens. But they present a fine appearance: there is no doubt of that. The horse dashes along at a rapid pace; the bells sound merrily; and the handsome sleigh and the bright-colored robes combine to make a pleasant picture to outsiders. The couple are out for a sleigh-ride, and they must enjoy it. He is very happy. His fingers feel like stove-legs; his feet ache with the cold; his nose and ears are batteries of sharp, tingling sensations; the play of his mouth has been crippled by the action of the biting air; and his spine appears to have been turned into a race-course for the special purpose of displaying the speed in a polar wave.

Everybody goes sleigh-riding. There is a peculiar fascination in it. She feels this as they glide along. It makes her very happy. Her new hat sits on the back of her head, displaying her crimps to the very best advantage, and exposing one-half of her head to the action of the weather. Her nose has become a deep carmine at the tip; her lips are livid, her eyes set, her cheeks icy; the kidded hands are stiff with the cold, and the kidded feet are benumbed beyond all recovery. Chills chase wildly along the nerve-centres of their bodies; and their faces are peppered with hardened snow and other things thrown up by the flying heels of the

horse. *Such* happiness! *such* joy! *such* exhilaration! People moving along on the walks observe them with envious eyes, while the keen air through which they are rushing is perforating them with a million sharp darts. They don't talk much now: their joy is too great for utterance, perhaps. At any rate, a silence falls upon them; and he is aware, when he attempts to say any thing, that his mouth threatens to slop all over his face, and stay there; and, when she attempts to laugh, it seems as if the lower half of her head was about to come off, and slip into the bottom of the sleigh, and be lost among the robes. This is an unhappy thought: but sleigh-riding seems to be the right thing to do; and they are doing it. And then — and this is really the cream of the fun — they both appear well; that is, there is nothing bungling or awkward in their appearance: they look stylish. And so they ride, and ride, and ride; and when they get back, and she stumbles into the house, and he reels into the stable and hands over the five dollars with his petrified fingers, there is something so massive about their joy, that it seems as if they never would be able to fully comprehend it.

Then there is the alligator, who owns a horse and sleigh of his own, and who, to get the worth of his money, has faced all kinds of weather with them, until his skin has become impervious, his nerves solidified, and his sensibilities deadened beyond all

recall. The only one sentiment he is capable of is revenge ; and, to gratify that, he is constantly prowling about in search of unsuspecting people, whom he beguiles into his sleigh. His chief victim is the man of sedentary pursuits, who, being always shut up, is the more easily seduced into the ride ; and, being always shut up, is the more susceptible to the cold. And so this unhappy wretch is caught up, and whirled through the cold air until every tooth in his head is loosened, and every drop of blood in his body is congealed, and every nerve strung to its highest tension of suffering ; until his heart stands still in pain, his brain becomes locked in a sea of ice, and his limbs have lost their power of motion. Then he is dumped out, and crawls back to his place of business a shattered wreck of his former self. Snow may come and go, flowers bloom and fall again, and thus the years creep on ; but that man will never be as he was before, — never, never again.

AN EXTREMELY PRACTICAL BOY.

“TOMMY,” observed a Nelson-street mother to her son, a youth of thirteen years, “you must cut some wood for the front-room stove. Mr. Crawford comes to-night.”

Mr. Crawford is a young man who is “keeping

company" with Fanny, Tommy's sister. The time was a Wednesday evening. Tommy had been skating since school, and was now anxiously awaiting his supper. The announcement came upon him with disagreeable force.

"Is that old rooster comin' around here to-night?" he impetuously inquired.

"Thomas!" cried his mother in a voice of horror.

Thomas, having eased his mind somewhat of the burden, proceeded to the wood-pile without further remark.

He was not in good humor as he looked around for the axe, and articles foreign to the search were moved with graceless haste.

"This is a reg'lar dog's life," he moodily ejaculated. "First it's Sunday night, an' then it is Wednesday night, an' then it's Friday night, an' every little while an extra night thrown in. I don't see what's the use of a girl about the house. If I've got to cut wood every time that feller comes, I'll know the reason why. I won't be put on like this. I ain't goin' to be made a pack-mule of, by George! for all the Crawfords and Fannys on earth. It's all nice enough for them to be in there toasting their shins, an' actin' sickish; but I notice that I have got to do all the work. It's played out, by Jinks! I ain't that kind of hair-pin. I'd just like to have somebody tell me," he added, looking

around for the person in question, "how much of the candy an' oranges an' other stuff that Fanny gets, I get. Not one whiff, by gracious! — *not one single, solitary whiff!* An' here I chop wood for her an' him night after night; an', if it wasn't for me, they'd shake all the teeth outen their heads. Oh, they are a sweet-scented pair, they are!"

Closing his remarks with this gloomy observation on his sister and her company, he worked away at the wood until the amount necessary was prepared. About seven o'clock, Mr. Crawford's knock sounded at the door. Fanny's mother was to have let him in; but Tommy volunteered his service. He escorted the young gentleman into the front-room; and then, backing himself against the door, he pointed to the stove, which was throwing out a most welcome heat, and sternly inquired, —

"Is that what you'd call a good fire?"

"Yes, indeed!" said Mr. Crawford, rubbing his hands gratefully.

"Ah!" observed Tommy in a tone of relief, although his face scarcely relaxed the severity of its expression. "You couldn't very well get along in here without a fire, could you?"

"Hardly."

"I s'pose not. Now, who do you s'pose made that fire?"

"Why — I — I suppose — why, I don't know."

said Mr. Crawford, apparently embarrassed by the question.

"No? Well, I can tell you. I made that fire. I cut the wood for it. I cut the wood, and make every fire you have here. I've been doing it all the while you've come here; and you and Fan have set by it, and toasted yourselves, and ate candy, and sucked oranges. You an' Fan have had all the comfort of it; an' I've done all the work, every bit of it. An' not one smell of them candies an' oranges have I had, — not a living smell." The unhappy boy knit his eyebrows, and instinctively clinched his hands. Scarcely less disturbed appeared Fanny's young man. He glanced uneasily from the fireman to the stove. But he made no reply. He waited apprehensively for what was to follow.

"I'll bet you've got a pound of assorted candies in your clothes this minute for Fan!"

This came so directly in the form of an interrogation, that Mr. Crawford unhesitatingly nodded.

"So I thought," pursued Fanny's brother. "Now, I want to tell you, that, if this fire-business is to be carried on by me, there's got to be a different arrangement of awards: if not, you can come up here and cut your own wood. Will you divy on them candies?"

"Why — why — I — I hardly would like to do that, Tommy. I got these for Fanny, you know."

"Yes, I know," said Tommy grimly. "When I see you come up here again, I shall expect to see you lugging an axe over your shoulder."

Mr. Crawford looked aghast.

"But, Tommy," he expostulated. "You won't come back on me like that? I'll pay you for doing it."

"Oh! What will you pay!"

"I'll give you fifty cents a week."

"Hope to die?"

"Yes," said Mr. Crawford eagerly.

"Then I am just your cheese," said the youth, the hard lines melting entirely out of his face. "There's nothing mean about me; but I don't want to go along in the dark. This thing had to be settled some way or another; for it was eating the life out of me. But, now that it is fixed, you'll find me up to the mark every time; and, if I don't make that stove rare right up on its hind-legs, I am a bald-headed leper without a pedigree."

And, with a flourish expressive of the deepest earnestness, he stalked out of the room.

LITTLE BOB'S GREAT GRIEF.

POOR little Bob! Bob had planned to go skating after school that day: but Bob's mother was afraid of the texture of the ice; and, when he came

home for his skates, she told him he could not go. Bob whined, and she told him to shut up. This caused him to whine again; when she slipped off her shoe, with the intimation she would give him something to cry for; and she did. Outraged in body and mind, Bob had betaken himself to his own room, and sullenly squatted on the side of the bed. His face had settled down into hard ridges, and his hands were clinched tight together. There was a strong rebellion in Bob's heart. He knew the ice was strong enough to bear an elephant; and he knew his mother knew it, and that her action was purely tyrannical. He had looked impartially over her conduct, and there could be no other explanation. If she had loved him, she would have done differently. They were hard thoughts that passed through Bob's mind as he sullenly sat there, and clinched his fingers into the palms of his hands. The shadows were gathering outside his window, and darkness was forming the night; but Bob did not notice it. His eyes were bent on the window; but he saw nothing through it: he saw only the tumultuous darkness of the storm in his little heart. Every once in a while, signs of the tempest inside appeared on the surface in long-drawn sobs. Bob wished he was dead; wished that the golden cord could snap right there and then. If he were dead, his mother's heart would be touched. She would bend over him in wild

grief and bitter upbraidings ; and he would lay there white and dead, and enjoy it. Bob's idea of death was comforting, but hardly orthodox. Bob did not want to be an angel ; but Bob did crave revenge. He hungered to get even with his mother. In the tumult of his heart, this unsightly object was constantly being tossed to the top ; and at every appearance it looked better and brighter to him. Open rebellion was out of the question, and Bob realized it. Bob's mother is one of those unhappy women who will be obeyed. What would Bob do ? The look in his eyes grew harder, the fingers increased their pressure, and the lines in his face — the hard, cruel lines — became more marked. Death would not come at the beck of a boy with tear-stained cheeks. But Bob would have his revenge without the aid of the dread messenger. Had his mother loved him, she could not have been so cruel. But he would test that love now, however great or little it might be. His own heart was numb with pain : why should not she suffer ? She should ! He brought his hands together with sharp nervous force, and uttered this determination aloud. He was in pain : so should she be. He could not defy her, but he could grieve her ; and he would. He would lacerate her feelings ; he would wring her heart ; he would crush her soul. How ? It doesn't seem possible that a heart so young could conceive such a cruel purpose.

Bob determined to eat no supper! He could hear the dishes rattle in the dining-room; but every sound only strengthened him in his determination. He would go without food, and gloat over the agony in his conscience-stricken mother's face as he faded slowly away before her eyes. How happy Bob was now! — so maliciously, so cruelly happy! Pretty soon there was a step in the hall. It was his mother coming to call him to supper. She opened the door.

"Robert!"

"'M."

"Come to your supper."

"I don't want no supper," he said in a constrained voice.

"Don't want any supper?"

"No," he mumbled.

"If you ain't down to your supper before we get through, the table will be cleared off, and you sha'n't have a mouthful," was the somewhat unexpected rejoinder.

"I don't care," he replied in a stifled voice.

Then the door was shut, and Bob was alone again, — a somewhat surprised and disappointed Bob. To his strained hearing every sound at the table was distinctly apparent. Then came the extra rattling of clearing away the things, and, shortly after, a silence. Poor Bob! He covered his hands over his head, and sobbed, and sobbed him-

self to sleep. When Bob awoke, the darkness was intense, and he was chilled to the marrow. He raised his head, and listened. Not a sound was heard. He crept out of bed, and found his way to the door. The hall was as dark as the room. His parents had gone to bed, and had never come near to see him fade slowly away, and were now, without doubt, sound asleep, with no thought of little Bob. How long he had slept he could not tell ; but, while he slept, a great transformation had gone on. The aching void in his heart had been transferred to his stomach. Shivering and quaking, he got out of his clothes and crept into bed, with a feeling that made him burrow his head out of sight beneath the covers. The next morning he did not have to be called to breakfast ; but at the table, under a self-inflicted protest of a mild type, he buried his grief under a pyramid of buckwheat-cakes.

A WINTER IDYL.

WHAT a frightful sensation that is, when you have just got home of a cold Monday night, and pulled your boots off, to be told that the week's washing is out on the line, and must be brought in ! Now, to do this of a dewy eve in the summer, with the delicate perfume of flowers filling the air, and a brass band on the next street, is not exactly a



A WINTER DAY. — Page 281.

hardship ; but to do it in the dead of winter, with a chilling breeze blowing, and the clothes as stiff as a rolling-pin, is something no man can contemplate without quaking. We don't quite understand how it is that a man invariably gets his boots off before the dread summons comes ; but the rest of it is plain enough. There is a sort of rebellious feeling in his heart which prompts him to try to entangle his wife in an argument ; and, failing in this, he snatches up the basket and goes out in the yard with it, rapping it against the chairs, and knocking it against the sides of the door with as much vigor as if it was not purely accidental. If the fond wife is anyway attentive, she can hear his well-known voice consigning various objects to eternal suffering, long after he has disappeared. There is no levity in a line of frozen clothes. Every article is as frigid as the Cardiff giant ; and the man who wrenches the pin off, and then holds the basket in expectation of seeing the piece drop off the line of its own accord, is too pure and simple for this world. But our man isn't of that nature. He catches hold of the garment with his chilled hands, and seeks to pull it off ; but it doesn't come. Then he yanks it upwards, and then downwards, and then sideways ; and, when it comes off, it maintains the shape it has been all the afternoon working into, which permits it just as readily to enter the basket as to be shoved through the key-hole of

a valise. The first articles he doubles up with his hands, and there is a faint semblance of carefulness in packing them away ; but, after that, he smashes them into the basket without any ceremony, and crowds them down with his foot. He uses the same care in taking down a fine cambric handkerchief that he does in capturing a sheet, and makes two handkerchiefs of every one. When he gets far from the basket, he allows the articles to multiply in his arms, so as to save steps ; and, when he gets his arms full of the awkward and miserable things, whose sharp, icy corners job him in the neck and face, he comes to an article that refuses to give way on one end. He pulls and shakes desperately at it, howling and screaming in his rage, until he inadvertently steps on the dragging end of a sheet, and then he comes down flat on the frozen snow, but bounds up again, grating his teeth, and, hastily depositing the bundle in the basket, darts back to the refractory member, and, taking hold of it, fiercely tugs at it, while he fairly jumps up and down in the extremity of his anger and cold. Then it comes unexpectedly, and with it a part of the next article, and he goes over again, this time on his back, and with violence. With the clothes gathered, he takes the basket up in his livid hands, thus bringing the top articles against his already frozen chin, and, thus tortured, propels his lifeless limbs into the house. She stands ready to tell him to

close the door, and is thoughtful enough to ask him if it's cold work. But, if he is a wise man, he will make no answer. If he is a wise man, he will silently plant himself in front of the stove, and, framing his frozen features into an implacable frown, will preserve that exterior, without the faintest modification, until bedtime.

THE MISSION OF A NIGHT.

AN exceedingly fine and stealthy rain stole upon Danbury late last night. It came so quietly, and froze so thoroughly, that not a soul knew of its presence on the walk and stoop. There was nothing to indicate its being there until it was stepped upon; and all Danbury came out doors as innocent and as unsuspecting as a babe in a spittoon. The general tableau was a back-stoop, with a hired girl frantically endeavoring to separate herself and a pail of slops, and to strike the ground on her feet; while at the front-door a sweet voice murmured "Good-by, dearest; come home early;" and a deep bass voice in response, "Yes, my precious, I'll — Whoop! Great heav—! *Ouch!*" At nine A.M., there wasn't a rheumatic person in town who knew where his liniment was.

WAS HE AFRAID?

THE trouble with the Danbury water-pipes in the past few days, although of a serious nature, has been productive of ludicrous incidents. One man on Division Street had his kitchen flooded by the bursting of a pipe late Friday night. Toward morning, he was taken with a sharp thirst; and getting up quietly, so as not to disturb his wife, or any one who might be in the house after plunder, he proceeded in the dark to the kitchen for a drink. That apartment is a step or two below the sitting-room; and, in descending to it, he planted one naked foot squarely in the water on the floor. With a promptness that is remarkable, considering the severe shock to his nervous system, he bounded back, and screamed, "Whoop! murder! let go of there, I tell ye!" Then a deep silence followed. "What's the matter?" asked his wife, who was awakened by his cry. There was no reply. "What's the matter?" she demanded in a louder voice, missing him from the bed. But still there was no answer. Now thoroughly frightened, she cried in a higher tone, "Reuben, Reuben! what is the matter?" and a suppressed voice within six inches of her head suddenly hissed, "Shut up your infernal clack, can't ye, ye old fool?" It is presumed Reuben knew what was the matter.

YOUNG COVILLE CATCHES ON BEHIND.

YOUNG COVILLE was out looking for a ride Friday afternoon. He had his sled with him, and wanted to fasten it to a horse-sleigh. An opportunity finally presented itself. It was a farmer who was driving; and he had two good horses. His son sat in the back of the sleigh, watching the various village boys. He was a pale boy, with a broad forehead and a soft brown eye. No one can read character so well as children; and, when Master Coville looked into the open countenance of the farmer-lad, he put after the sleigh with all his might, and, catching up to it, threw himself on the tail-board, keeping his eye firmly fixed on the farmer-boy. Then the farmer-boy suggested that young Coville get on his own sled, and he would hold the rope for a little way. The offer was accepted at once; and Master Coville mounted his own sled, where he rode in triumph, to the envy of every boy he passed. Getting towards the suburbs, the farmer, who was quite deaf, hurried forward his horses; and Master Coville tried to look ahead without smiling; but it was impossible, the speed was so exhilarating. When the party got by Granville Avenue, young Coville told the farmer-boy that he guessed he'd be going back, and, if he'd kindly drop the rope, he'd confer a favor. The farmer-boy smiled a rural smile, but didn't

relax his hold on the rope. Young Coville smiled too, but rather feebly, and again repeated his request. But the soft brown eye was musing, and the rope still remained in the owner's grasp. Young Coville began to look scared. It was after five o'clock, and would be dark in an hour; and here he was, sailing out into the country at the rate of eight miles an hour.

"Let go of there, why don't you?" he asked.

The farmer-boy smiled, — one of those blossoming smiles, which told of green dells and moss-fringed brooks.

"If you don't let go of that rope, I'll just get into that sleigh, and smash yer darned old snoot!" suggested young Coville; which was a very imprudent statement, in view of the fact that every muscle was engaged in keeping his seat.

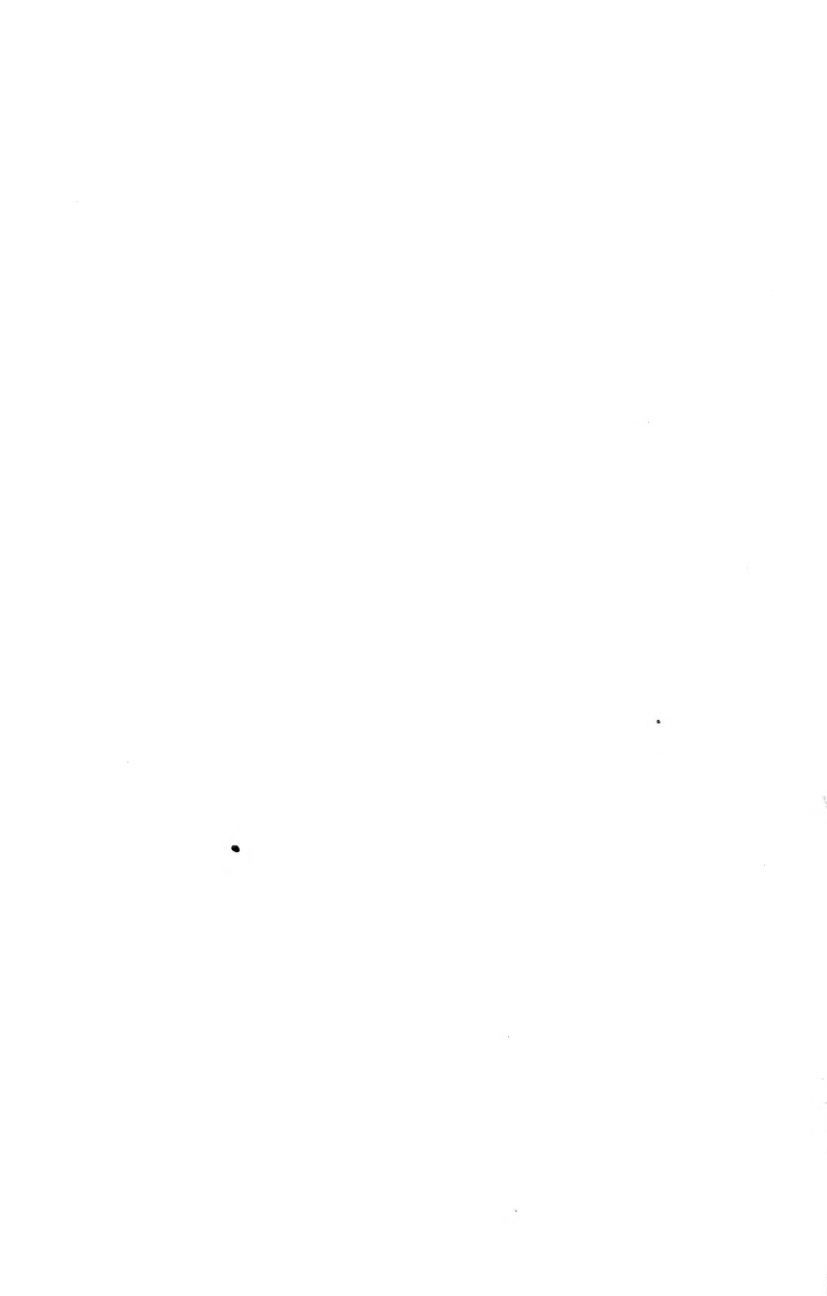
But the farmer-lad did not let go. He kept his hold of the rope, and kept up the smiles, — the waving-grain and blooming-daisy smiles.

"Oh! I'll make you laugh on the other side of your mouth if you don't let go of that rope!" shouted young Coville as he saw the paved sidewalks give way to foot-paths, and gardens dissolve into broad, snow-clad fields.

On they went, the farmer-lad smiling so beautifully, and young Coville grating his teeth, and shouting the awful things he would do in the future.

About four miles out of town, and as they were passing through a heavy wood, the farmer-boy smiled a broad smile, and let go of the rope ; and, as the sleigh darted away, the rope passed under the sled, bringing it up so suddenly as to throw young Coville heels over head into the snow. When he got up, the sleigh was going over a hill, and his tormentor was throwing agricultural kisses at him.

It was late at night when Master Coville reached his home ; but, when he went to bed, there were thirteen snowballs, soaked with water, freezing slowly but surely on a board in the back-yard.



ETCHINGS.



ETCHINGS.

WERE YOU EVER THERE?

WHEN a young man is in love, he becomes suspicious of his male companions ; but he doesn't understand why any one similarly involved should entertain this feeling toward him. The object of the other party's choice is indifferent to him. He sees nothing especially attractive in her countenance or accomplishments ; and, if he chooses to pay her an attention, it is the prompting of courtesy ; and, if the other party should object, it is mean jealousy. When a man thoroughly loves a woman, he sees in her an attraction not before noticeable ; and so conspicuous become these good qualities to him, that he easily imagines they are as plain to other gentlemen ; and any favor they may show her is simply a desperate endeavor to gain the gem he so fondly hopes to wear. It is this simple misunderstanding which causes four-fifths of the heart-burnings and misery attendant upon loving and being loved.

A lovers' quarrel is a formidable affair while it is in progress. It shrouds the two souls in a chilling pall of impenetrable gloom; but, looked back upon from the changed circumstances worked by time, it appears so silly and ridiculous as to be really exasperating.

There was such a state of feeling existing between two of our young folks Sunday evening. They attended church. In the pew given them was a young gentleman, who sat at the opposite end. They entered without disturbing him; and she was brought next to him. They three were acquainted. He nodded to her, and smiled; then he whispered to her, and she looked wonderfully pleased, and whispered back. Her young man smiled too: he knew that he should do something of the sort, if he didn't want to appear painfully conspicuous to the public, which was ready in an instant to divine his jealousy, and gloat over his defeat. But it is a hard matter to smile when you see nothing to smile at: it makes the face tired in an incredibly small space of time. The service proceeded. The lover reached over and spoke to her. He had to speak twice before she heard him. She was apparently abstracted with thought. What thoughts? It made him sick. At the giving-out of the hymn, he leaned forward to take a book from the rack just as the young man secured one. He drew back. What

was that young man going to do? Have her sing with himself, of course. All right: he would not make a fool of himself by looking up a place, offering it to her, and running the risk of a refusal. And so the young man found the place, and extended the book to her. Poor girl! She cast a furtive glance at her lover. He had made no provision for the emergency. She didn't want to sing with this young man. She didn't love him. It was not his shoulder she wanted to press. She took hold of the book, and wondered with all her heart what was the matter with *him*. Was he ill? Was he a little bit jealous? Woman intuition had struck it, as was evident in the increased brightness of her eyes, in the additional flush to her face. She could not help it any more than she could ward off the fury of Vesuvius; but she was happy in the thought. It was another and a marked evidence of his love.

And he!—what of him? Well, he sat as stiff as if he had suddenly been run full of lead. To add to the pain gnawing at his heart-strings, he felt that nearly every eye in the building was bearing upon him. He looked carefully over the ceiling of the church, staring at the most trifling objects thereon with a fiery intensesness. If he could only make the people believe that he was enraptured with the beautiful and ennobling occupation of architecture, he would be satisfied. If

success is commensurate with earnestness of purpose, he was entitled to it. The service moved along. All the time, the pit of his stomach appeared to be receding away from him, and yet making itself dreadfully felt. His mind ran recklessly to death, hearses, and graveyards. He pictured her in the midst of a gay company, talking, laughing, flirting with this young man, when the news is suddenly let in upon her that he is dead. *Dead!* cold, stark, stiff, — the one who loved her so madly! There was a grim pleasure in his heart as the picture unfolded her in awful convulsions, calling wildly for him; and on the dark background of the ghastly spectacle was written in flame of fire, "*Too late, too late!*" Over and over again, this horrible phantasm was conjured up.

And she sat there, happy in her own conceit, and yet feeling pity for him.

And so the service went on; and the meeting closed, and they all passed out. He walked stiffly. She moved easily, with radiant face; and the young man was as beaming as a sun-flower. She told him she had not seen him in a dog's age, and wanted to know why he didn't come up to the house any more. He smiled cheerfully, and said he had been very busy of late, but would make all amends at once. At which she appeared quite pleased, although she secretly hoped he would continue to be too busy to come; but the words were gall and wormwood to the lover.

They got outside finally, and were moving along alone, these two pledged hearts. His face was like a stone, and the pit of his stomach was as faint as a traveller in a weary land. He was rapidly planning his future course. She was heartless: that had been satisfactorily demonstrated. She could not deny this, and also that there had been no provocation. He must leave her. Ah! he would treat her indifferently now: he would give her a little taste of the pain which he was suffering, and see how she liked it. Ah! perhaps she might like it. Oh! the perspiration stood out on his brow in great beads. Heavens! could it be possible she was already gone out to that young man? He must not be rash; and yet—she must suffer too; yes, yes, she must suffer too. He was on the alert for the first evidence of pain on her part. He hungered for it. He wanted her to droop into a despairing silence. Unfortunately, her sex rarely meets expectations.

“How did you like the sermon?” she artlessly asked.

He would have much rather that she asked him why he was so still; but he crowded down the disappointment, and determined to be as indifferent as she was.

“Oh! pretty well,” he said, raising his voice a trifle more than was absolutely necessary.

“I never enjoyed a sermon any better in my

life," she maliciously observed, at the same time being quite confident she hadn't been so miserable in a week.

He winced, but promptly said, —

"That's just what I think about it. I shall go to that church every evening after this."

They talked about one thing and another during the rest of the way, the interest drooping more and more as they neared her door. Would he go in? he asked himself a hundred times. And every time he said No,—at first firmly and with vigor, but at last very faintly indeed. When they reached the house, he hesitated. She walked up on the stoop, opened the door, and, turning to him, said, "Ain't you coming in?"

He wasn't; but she had not yet weakened sufficiently. So he would go in, but remain dark and stiff like a mummy, to show her what it was to suffer. But he would not give in to her. She would mutely appeal to him, and creep up close to him, and tumble his hair; but he would not melt. He would go away in a few minutes as repellant as he now felt, and she would retire with a dreadful pain in her heart. It was a bright picture he thus conjured,—so bright, that he almost smiled in its radiance.

Then he went in. Had he been a hearse in a city of two million inhabitants, he could not have entered that house with more solemn magnificence.

He didn't go near the sofa: he dropped into a chair, and stared moodily at the carpet. She arranged the lamp, and sank down on the sofa. There was an attempt on her part to shake off the gloom; but he did not respond. He only thought of his suddenly dying, and of her going into mad-dening convulsions. He sat there, and wanted to die, so as to see how she would take on about it; although dead men are not particularly noted for very keenly observing what takes place about them in this life.

The conversation lagged. Both of them were losing their Sunday evening, the dearest to them of all the week; and she was feeling it keenly. And yet she would persist in talking about the most foreign subjects; while he would gloomily eye the carpet, and answer in the most depressing monosyllables. Finally he got up, and said in a constrained voice that he guessed he must be going. He moved for his hat, wishing that it was a mile away, and feeling as if he would give his life if she would only speak to him. But she took up the light as if this was the farthest from her intentions, and prepared to see him to the door. There was a gloom resting on both of them now, a fearful looking forward to a woe that was to come.

He reached the door without a word being exchanged, and was turning around in an awkward

way to bid her good-night, when a peculiar look — a half-sorrowful, half-smiling look in her eyes — caused him to hesitate, and respond with the same expression.

“What is the matter with you, darling?” she asked, getting as close to him as possible.

There is no need of further accompanying them. In the short space of two minutes, they were squarely posted on the dear, familiar lounge; and it was two o’clock the next morning, as usual, when he left.

As for the other young man, he had eaten a piece of pie and gone to bed hours ago, totally unconscious of the misery he had caused and of those enduring it.

COURTING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

THE epizoötic is not entirely confined to horses, as the following will show. They had been keeping company a year. He told her Friday afternoon that he would be up early Sunday evening, as he had something of great importance to tell her, and a present to give her. With a woman’s keen intuition, she knew what the something of importance would be, and she looked forward to the hour with sweet expectation. He was there on time, but hardly in the condition he desired. A heavy cold had tackled him the night before,

and his eyes were red and inflamed; and his nose was nearly twice its natural size, and shone with a lustre that would have appeared to much better advantage on a door-plate. Singularly enough, the young lady was similarly conditioned. She ushered him into the parlor; and, without any preliminary ceremony, they were on the sofa together. He took out his handkerchief, and, finding a dry section, wiped his nose. This reminded her of a duty she owed herself; and she attended to it at once. He held one of her hands in one of his, and his handkerchief in the other. Then he spoke:—

“Susad, I cub do nide do dalk do you of subdig dearer—ah-ah-oooh (a prompt application of the handkerchief cuts off the sneeze in its bud), dearer do me thad my libe—ah-ah—thad id—oooh-oooh-ker chew, ker chew, ker chew!” A moment’s pause. “I’be god an awvul code,” he explains with due solemnity.

“Sobe I,” she sympathizingly replies.

A moment is devoted to a silent use of the handkerchiefs; and then he continues:—

“Darlig, you musd hab seed all de tibe how mudge—oooh-oooh-ker (the handkerchief again saves him)—how mudge I hab dhought ob you. Ebry hour ob de day or nide—ah-ah-oooh—oooh-ch-ch-ker chew, KER CHEW, KER CHEW!”

“Thid id awvul,” he protested, walking around the room; for the final explosion had raised him to

his feet. She wiped her eyes, and then her nose, and made an honest endeavor to look languishing; but owing to the watery condition of the former, and the fiery glow of the latter, she appeared to an unhappy advantage. But he did not notice it. He felt of his proboscis tenderly for a moment, and then returned to her side.

“Darlig, I cad no loger lib widoud you. Widoud you, libe would indeed be a widderness; wid” —

She impulsively raised her hand.

“Ker-ker-ker *chew!*” she shouted.

He paused, and gazed tenderly out of his inflamed eyes upon her convulsed features.

“Darlig,” he softly continued, seeing she was through, “you cad neber know how mudge — ah-ooh-ooh-ah-ker chew, ker — wish — sh-sh-er-r-r, ker chew, ker chew — Ooh, my! — oh, dear!” he wailed, impetuously grabbing for his handkerchief, while the tears ran down his cheeks.

She took advantage of the lull to unobtrusively apply her handkerchief.

“Susad,” he began again, grasping her hand with fervor, and clutching his handkerchief with equal earnestness, “what id libe widoud lub? Noddig. Darlig, do yoo, cad yoo, lub me enough to be my — ah-ah-ooh-ker-chew! Heavigs, thid id awvul.” He mopped the perspiration from his troubled countenance, and then waited until she re-appeared from behind her handkerchief, when he resumed: —

"I ask aged, darlig, cad yoo lub me enough to be me wibe?"

The young girl dropped her head upon his breast, put her arm around his neck, and was just about to speak the glad answer, when a sudden spasm shook her frame, and she went off into a series of sneezes which fairly endangered the safety of her fair neck. "O my lub! O my brechious!" he sympathizingly exclaimed, "sbeak, oh, sbeakd!—abooh-ooh-ker-chew, ker-chew, ker-chew!" he roared.

She fell into his arms again, perfectly exhausted.

"You'll be mide, all mide!" he gasped.

"I will, Hedry, I will!" she hoarsely whispered.

He drew her to him with all his strength, and slipped the ring upon her trembling finger; and there they stood together, their reddened and half-closed eyes, blinking in sweet, holy ecstasy upon each other, while their exhausted nostrils shone with a dim refulgence.

"My boor darlig has got sudge a bad code," he sympathizingly murmured

"So id my Hedry," she softly whispered back.

"I dode gare for myseld. I"—he suddenly put her away, recovered his handkerchief, and instantly went off in a paroxysm of sneezes.

"Oh!" he sighed, as he regained a perpendicular again, and mopped off his face, which was now almost purple in hue.

"You must dake sub medicid for that code to-nide," she said.

"Both ob us," he added.

"Yes, a'd you'll zoak your feed in hod wader."

"I will, a'd you'll zoak yours?" he eagerly asked.

"I will," she solemnly replied.

"Hevig bless you, my darlig, my brecious darlig!" he murmured, clasping her again tightly to his breast. And then he stole out into the darkness; and she lingered a moment at the door, and heard his dear voice ring out on the night-air as he passed away, —

"Ker chew, *ker chew*, KER C-H-E-W!"

THE BAD BROTHER.

HE got two pounds of cream caramels for her (he got two pounds of them, because it's a confec-tion she adores); then he overhauled her young brother, who was scooting around on the street with characteristic aimlessness, and got him to take the package up to the house. He gave the young man a nickel for the performance of the errand, and made security doubly secure by telling him, with an air of unblemished confidence, that it was a package of worsted, and that he must be very careful to deliver it. The young brother started briskly for home; but, as soon as he was out of sight of the donor, he paused, and, with a perplexed expression of countenance, began to

carefully weigh and press the package. His perplexity increasing, he carefully poked a hole in the wrapper; then he smiled such a wholesome smile, that it was really delightful to see it; then he quickened his pace.

When our hero called in the evening, he looked anxiously for marks of the caramels on his beloved's chin; but he looked in vain: there was not even the faintest indication at the corners of her lovely mouth that any thing in the line of cream caramels had travelled that way for some time. He waited all the evening for some mention of the refreshment; but not a word: he was *non-plussed*. Nearly the third of a week's salary had gone in this purchase; and he might as well have dropped it into the crater of Vesuvius, as far as satisfaction was concerned. The mystery appalled him. Before morning, there was another mystery in that house. It took a doctor and one-third of an aroused neighborhood to subdue young Johnny's stomach-ache. Such an astonishing ache was never before crowded into such narrow limits. The doctor couldn't understand it; neither could anybody else. Johnny's nose doesn't mar the plate-glass of confectionery windows now; and the man who went to see Johnny's sister has taken to drink.

He was on his knees to her. His face was flushed ; his eyes gleamed passionately into her's ; he talked rapidly :—

“ Nothing shall separate us evermore, my darling. For your sake I will beard the lion in his den ; I will face death on the battle-field ; I will skim the seas ; I will endure all hardship, all suffering, all misery.”

He paused, and looked eagerly to her, with his whole soul quivering in his eyes.

“ Will you do all this for the sake of my love ? ” said she, gazing earnestly into the burning eyes.

“ Yes, yes, a thousand times yes ! ”

“ And if we wed,” continued she, flushing slightly, “ will you get up first and build the fire ? ”

With a shriek of despair he fled.

A PRUDENT YOUNG MAN.

ONE of the Danbury young men who has occasionally escorted a young lady home on Sunday evenings, and went in for lunch, after performing both services last Sunday night, suddenly said to her, —

“ Do you talk in your sleep ? ”

“ Why — no,” she answered in surprise.

“ Do you walk in your sleep ? ” he next inquired.

“ No, sir.”

He moved his chair an inch closer, and with increased interest asked, —

“Do you snore?”

“No,” she hastily replied, looking uneasily at him.

At this reply his eyes fairly sparkled; his lips eagerly parted; and, as he gave his chair another hitch, he briskly inquired, —

“Do you throw the combings from your hair in the wash-basin?”

“What’s that?” she asked with a blank face.

He repeated the question, although with increased nervousness.

“No, I don’t,” she answered in some haste.

Again his chair went forward; while his agitation grew so great, that he could scarcely maintain his place upon it, as he further asked, —

“Do you clean out the comb when you are through?”

“Of course I do,” she said, staring at him with all her might.

In an instant he was on his knees before her, his eyes ablaze with flame, and his hands outstretched.

“Oh, my dear miss! I love you,” he passionately cried. “I give my whole heart up to you. Love me, and I will be your slave. Love me as I love you, and I will do every thing on earth for you. Oh! will you take me to be your lover, your husband, your protector, your every thing?”

It was a critical moment for a young woman of her years ; but she was equal to the emergency, as a woman generally is, and she scooped him in.

HE wanted her ; but she would not give her consent until he had consulted her parents : so he went into the room where they were, and modestly stated the case.

“ And you really think you love her enough to marry her ? ” said the father, after he had finished.

“ Oh, yes, sir ! ” said the youth in fervent eagerness : “ I love her with all my soul. I love her better than I do my life. She is my guiding-star, the worshipped object of my every thought, every hope, every aspiration.” He stood there with clasped hands, his face radiant with the strength of his devotion. There was a moment of pause ; and then the mother softly asked, —

“ What do you think of that, old man ? ”

“ That sounds like business, old woman,” replied the satisfied father.

And so it was arranged that the daughter should accept her suitor.

A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION.

THEY had a quarrel Sunday evening. He got mad, and swore he'd leave her ; then she got vexed, and told him he could do as he pleased. He left. The next night he came around again. He asked to see her alone. She readily complied. She was all of a tremor. Her heart went out to him in a gush of sympathetic love. She stood ready to throw both arms about his neck, and cry out her joy. There was not much color in his face, and his voice was husky. He said, —

“I have been with you six months, Matilda; and I tried in all that time to do what was right.” He paused an instant to recover the voice which was faltering rapidly, while her trembling increased. “I know that I have got considerable temper, and that I do not control it always as I ought: but I have tried to be faithful to you, — tried to do every thing that I thought would tend to make you happy; and, feeling this, I have called to-night to see if you wouldn't be kind enough to give me a sort of testimonial to this effect, so that I could show it to any other young lady I might want to go with. It might help me.”

He looked at her anxiously. All the color left her face in a flash. She made a great effort to swallow something which threatened to suffocate her. Then she spoke: —

“ You get out of this house as quick as you can, you miserable whelp, or my father shall kick you out ! ”

He didn't toy with time. He left without the testimonial.

PHOTOGRAPHING HER MA.

HE is a young photographer, just starting in business and love. The other afternoon, his girl's mother called for a sitting. He desired to make a most favorable impression upon that portion of her mind which could appreciate photography, and so he became a trifle nervous in the work. But he got her fixed finally, with her eyes fixed glassily on a certain object, as is the custom ; then he drew the cloth, took out his watch, and counted off thirty seconds, restored the cloth, and drew out the case.

“ Gracious ! ” he unintentionally ejaculated, “ I forgot to put in the plate.”

The old lady had to sit again, and she prepared for the ordeal, but with confidence in the operator considerably abated. He was more nervous now than before, and it was some few minutes before he had her arranged to suit the focus. Then the cloth was again removed, the watch again pulled out. He counted off the thirty seconds, removed the cloth, and drew out the case.

"Great heavens!" he groaned in a frightened voice, "I forgot to pull out the slide!"

The prospective mother-in-law sprang to her feet, snatched up her hat and shawl, and, pausing long enough to inquire if he was drunk, shot out of the door, leaving the pallid-faced artist grasping a chair for support.

ALMOST A MISUNDERSTANDING.

HE called Sunday night, as had been his custom for several weeks. After they got together alone in the parlor, he plucked up his courage to the proper point, and proposed to her, telling her of the days when every thought was of her, and only her. Then he said, —

"Dearest, will you be mine?"

And she said, —

"I will."

Then he caught her in his arms, and pressed her drooping face close to his yearning breast.

Tighter still he drew his arms about her.

"My darling," he started to whisper, bending his face close to hers; when her head flew up so suddenly as to catch him under the chin with sufficient force to almost amputate his tongue.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"Phew!" she ejaculated: "why, how you smell!"

"*Smell!*" he repeated, while his smarting tongue forced the tears into his eyes.

"Yes," she replied, bending her face again to his breast, and sniffing expectantly. "Oh, my! it is awful!" she added as she drew back her head.

He dropped his own nose into the infected neighborhood, and took a sniff; and then, as his face lighted up, he cheerfully explained:—

"Oh! that is my plaster. I put it on for a cold."

"Oh!" said she in a tone of relief. And again she dropped her head on his yearning breast, only a little higher up, and a little more to one side; while he ran out his tongue, and tenderly caressed the wound with his handkerchief.

TEN YEARS AFTER.

SHE was at a party. He had not yet arrived; but she was momentarily expecting him. The hum of conversation through the room had no significance for her: all her faculties were bent on the front-door. Every time it opened, at every step in the hall-way, she would start, while her face would flush, and her eyes light up with feverish expectation. Then the color would go back from her cheeks, her eyes would dull, and her heart sink, when another than he came into the room. Finally he arrived, and took a seat by her; and she leaned over his shoulder, and joyously murmured,—

“My darling, my darling!” She was too happy to say aught more.

Ten years later, and she again waits: it is in their own home now. His step is on the stoop; he opens the door. She springs quickly to the hall.

“Clean your feet!” she screams.

Ten years ago they were not married: now they are.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

FITZ HENRY, who goes with Arabella, was on hand as usual Sunday evening, when high words ensued between the two. Fitz Henry is a man of the period, and Arabella is a full-stop woman. We don't know how the trouble originated; but this is what was said by the twain:—

HE. — You told —— you wouldn't go.

SHE. — If I did, I don't know myself.

HE. — Well, that's what he said.

SHE. — I ain't the girl to give myself away like that, you bet.

HE. — What would the galoot say it for, then? That's what's the matter.

SHE. — Because he found somebody soft enough to scoop it in, I guess.

HE (agonizingly). — Are you coddling me, Arabella?

SHE (softening). — Why should I cod you?

HE. — I don't know why you should, when I love you bang up.

SHE (very softly). — Then, Hen, why should we let this rooster get us on our ear? If we are going to mind every liar that comes around, we are going to keep in hot water all the time; but, if we keep a stiff upper lip, they'll soon get tired of shooting off their mouths at us.

This view must have struck him favorably, as there was a sound of upper lips undergoing a strengthening process, preceded by a signification on his part to "paste the rooster back of the ear."

HE had gone up to her house with her from a shopping-excursion the other afternoon. While he was there, such a flood of tenderness came over him, that he impulsively dropped on his knees before her, and, giving her a glance that spoke volumes, huskily said, "I can no longer keep my feelings back. I love you. Oh! will you, oh! will you be" —

"—SHAD! ten cents!" rang out the clarion voice of a street-vender before the house.

She made a clutch for her handkerchief to cover up her emotion; but she was too late. The ludicrousness of the combined sentiments was too

much for her intellect, and she melted into a prolonged giggle. His face flushed scarlet; and, for an instant, he was too profoundly impressed to realize his position. Then he shot up on his feet, and, with a howl of rage, departed. Really, ought not more intelligent and more discriminating people to be employed on fish-wagons.

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